

AMANDA
OF THE MILL

MARIE VAN VORST

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



Cornell University Library
PS 3543.A645A4 1905

Amanda of the mill /



3 1924 021 714 104

olin



Cornell University
Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

Amanda of the Mill

Amanda of the Mill

By

Marie Van Vorst

*Author of The Girl from His
Town, First Love, The Sentimen-
tal Adventures of Jimmy Bul-
strode, The Broken Bell, etc., etc.*

Indianapolis

The Bobbs-Merrill Company

Publishers

COPYRIGHT 1904, 1905
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

72702B
205
X

PRESS OF
BRAUNWORTH & CO.
BOOKBINDERS AND PRINTERS
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

To
My Mother

Contents

	Book I	PAGE
<i>Freeborn</i>		1
	Book II	
<i>The Captives</i>		59
	Book III	
<i>The Greater Bondage</i>		153
	Book IV	
<i>The Deliverance</i>		291

Book I
Freeborn

. . . Nor does a woman know at once she loves,
Subtle, intangible, a change has come
In fibre and in blood. The world grows wide
In one day—dwindles to a span the next.
Heaven touches her, then hades mocks her bliss.
Suddenly she is all made of tears and strange
Sweet tremblings . . . and yet she is deceived,
Till sharp and swift and deep a knife has pierced
Her uttermost life; she holds her aching heart,
And finds how she can suffer—then she knows.

Amanda of the Mill

Chapter I

WHEN the sun shone thus full on Amanda she was as though molten in its rays—a golden image! Such a pretty image that the god might well be enamoured of her and infuse her; and this the full mid-day sun of late April—did.

The gently stirring leaves of the budding trees alone saw the girl, scarcely more than child, who stood on the brink of a little inland lake, the sunlight around her, the forest back of her, and the shimmering water's surface before her eyes.

It was intensely hot, but not with the intolerable city sultriness, for the unspoiled woods kept freshness and eternal sweetness in its breath: but the heat filling the Blue Ridge Mountains for a week past had culminated this noon to brazen temperature. The languor, the slow, caressing touch, had drawn Amanda from the cabin to a haunt she dearly loved, and had only waited for sufficient heat to enjoy. No shadows flecked the pool; not a breeze shook its torpor. In its topaz basin, reed-bound, yellow-sand bedded, it lay a disc of gold.

On the bank, partaking of the umber tone of the sand, a little pile of coarse garments lay just as they had fallen from the young limbs of the girl. The trees, too far away to throw their shadows over her, left the sun at full vantage; and it pricked lightly as thus exposed she stood straight and lithe, coiling as tight as she could her hair on the top of her head. Shrinking, shivering, as she guessed how cold the water would be, she approached, halted, went boldly in. From knee to breast, from breast to neck, the water rose, until the golden ripple hid all of her save her head. Then

she swam, not very valiantly, it must be said—rather a naïve sort of paddling—but it took her across the pool to the opposite side. Her chin raised, her eyes lifted, she blew back clear little bubbles that lingered like dew on the flower of her lips.

This dryad, primitive sight was alone seen by the leaves and a few birds with whom the swimmer seemed to be friend, for she called to one from the water in a voice as sweet as his when he replied from the branch. There was no tell-tale wind to carry the story of Amanda's bath, and knowledge of it went no further than the birch-bordered banks of Puddam Pond.

The dense wood was as still as sleep, and in its companionable quiet the little hill-girl dressed leisurely. When her last garments were safely on she drew a sigh of content, and prepared for her one extravagance of toilet; from the pocket of her gown she took a piece of pink ribbon—a new piece, silken and soft. She shook it out, she looked at it with adoration. It was her only bit of finery. She gathered up her hair, and was about to knot the ribbon in it (in honour of this head-dress she had taken a bath), when her well-trained ear caught the sound of an intruder. With a little exclamation of terror, at the certain appearance by Puddam of someone who had no right to its precincts, she turned and fled. In the start she had given she dropped her snood of pink ribbon on the grass.

Something in the atmosphere of the place told the man he was close to his kind, although no smoke from a friendly chimney rose to give him welcome. As he came out from the denser forest into a little opening, he paused in his slow, painful gait. To all appearances, he was near the end of a long journey; by all appearances, he had taken many, but they were well-nigh done! He belonged to the class who cumber the earth, who ask—who create responsibilities for others—who pain us by suggesting duties we shrink from fulfilling; he belonged to the Miserable Ones, the Outcasts; he was an inhabi-

tant of that city whose population is as great as the world—the City of Failure. His shoes, well made and of patent-leather, he would have thought at one time too thin to wear into winter streets. They had trodden the snows and slushes and dust of many months. The soles were tied on his feet with strings, and his bare skin showed through at the sides. He wore no stockings. The rest of his attire, a compromise with decency, consisted of a pair of trousers in shocking rags, a thin flannel shirt, and a faded sack-coat.

“Jove!” he said aloud, “hot as ever!”

He found it hard to walk, hard to stand; therefore he leaned against a tree, bending drowsily forward, his head hanging down, his arms on his knees, his eyes half closed, his long, dark hair falling about his face. He was slowly awakening from a sleep that had been deeper than he realized, and the loud, fierce hum of the insects beat in his ears. He opened his eyes finally, and looked curiously at his hands, spreading them out before him. They were slender, well-shaped, with oval nails, and almost transparent.

“I believe, upon my soul!” he said with a smile, holding his hand up against the light, “that I shan’t see the game out.” The smile stayed about his mouth, curious, sceptical. “I scarcely remember how I got here into the forest . . . the instinct that makes the animal crawl away to die. It can’t go on, you know,” he said, addressing his feet, which his singular look had observed. “Existence on a piece of bread is precarious. What heat!—what frightful, glaring heat!”

Here a sound caught his attention. As he listened a faint colour came into his face. . . . It was certainly a human voice.

He again spoke, and aloud.

“Somebody’s got a house hereabouts, but I’ve about as much right to want to see a human being as a wild beast has, and I guess to the majority I’d be nearly as welcome.”

He fumbled in his pocket, and found an empty flask,

the common whisky-bottle sold at the grocer's; he scowled at it.

"I couldn't pay to have it filled if there was a hog's-head at hand. . . . So my first word of gratitude to any of my kind that I may chance to meet will be 'Whisky! for God's sake (or the devil's); and I can't pay for it, either!' And if I hold back the fire that's burning me, until I can steal some, well—my hosts won't think they're entertaining an angel unawares."

He had come out now to the pool, and he limped over to the border. Across its breast the light lay golden; the cool sweetness did not tempt him in any but a sinister way. He was too far gone in illness and disease to be ravished by the sight of the inland lake.

His bleared vision travelled indifferently to the stirring reeds on the other side. A temptation, not new, but one which he had often deeply harboured, came to him. The empty bottle taunted, hunger gnawed him, a thirst like a snapping creature bit at his throat. It seemed as though a hot cloth were wound round his gullet. He knew that he could free this sensation by drink.

"It is too much!" he murmured. "Why, if I *do* find a house, what then? And if I don't, it will all be up with me to-morrow. This can't last another night." He walked unsteadily toward the water. "It's deep enough. . . . I think I'll hand in my checks without even knowing what the day of the week is, or what State of the Union I'm in."

He had scarcely reached the margin when a bright thing caught his wandering eye—a *piece of pink ribbon* lying in the grass; it tangled on a strong blade, and it was carried thence to another, and swung like a little flag.

This miniature evidence of animation caused the tramp actually to smile as he picked up the ribbon. He smelt it, ran it through his fingers—and the sensation startled him back to life.

"It belongs to a woman, of course. I am certainly

near humanity again. . . . If I drown myself, they will find me here and shudder at it. . . . She shan't! I will carry her ribbon to her, whoever she is, and take my leap at the next pool."

With this thought in his befogged brain, he dragged himself painfully up the bank, the ribbon in his hands. Before he could decide whither to direct his shaking steps, he heard the sound of voices near him. The tones struck him like pain. He bit his lips, and stretched out his trembling hands, his fingers clenched over the ribbon; instinctively he thrust it into his pocket. The voices came nearer, and through the trees Henry Euston saw the figures of two women approaching. The first girl gave a cry, and stepped back. His gestures were beyond his control—he waved his hands in a kind of salute.

"Don't be frightened, please," he managed to say; "I don't mean any harm. I am . . ."

Then he sank on his knees, staring at them. In this ridiculous posture, although horribly ashamed of it, he was forced to remain. He heard one of the girls say:

"He's sick—he's terrible sick," and the other one: "Oh, I'm so scared of him!"

The woman who first spoke came forward toward Euston; he looked but once at her: the other had large blue eyes and a pretty face framed in yellow hair. To his blurred vision she was angelic.

"It's *her* pink ribbon," he murmured foolishly. "I'm glad I didn't drown myself."

They were lifting him on either side; their arms were strong.

"Kin you-all git up and come with us? It ain't fer."

Summoning his forces, he gathered himself to his feet, and, leaning on the sisters heavily, he tottered and stumbled and staggered out of the forest.

Boldly against the border of an impenetrable forest Henchley's cabin brought its weather-beaten face. About four feet of sand road separated it from the Daco wil-

derness, as this portion of the pine-grown mountains of South Carolina is called. Straight, unswerving pines in level rows shot cleanly up from the dry, sweet soil. The cabin was a landmark for the district, standing as it did twelve miles from the civilization of Daco—the nearest town—a little settlement on the line of the Seaboard Air Line road.

Henchley's was built of planed boards, and in this differed from log-cabins of the backwoods. It was still further distinctive in that it lacked an accommodating quality which life, animate and inanimate, possesses in the South—the assuming of the colour of the soil—blending, softening into the yellow tone the country wears. The saffron robe of the South folds and veils everything in its chrome-like hue. Henchley's stubbornly preserved its individuality; it remained a pearl-gray shine of shingle. The number of three rooms was its boast, and this constituted it a palace in distinction from low, one-roomed dwellings scattered over the district, housing in lax promiscuity, hives-full of tangle-headed, shiftless whites.

The inhabitants of Henchley's were more original than typical: an old woman whose husband had been sheriff of the region, and her two granddaughters—fine-boned, delicately built, pretty creatures, with blood as pure and unmixed as American blood can run in the continent. From the early settler times when the States south of Pennsylvania received the infiltrating of the French and English, there had been no break in this family lineage. There were bandits then, there were law-breakers; there were fierce, uncompromisingly criminal vagabonds. There were also well-born, high-bred men of title whose blood and race can be traced again in taper waists and proud turn of ankles, in delicate line of brow and pure hybrid line of nostril. At all events, whether law-breaker or marquis left his descendants in the Henchley's, the old grandmother was a leader, a high chief of an illicit trade. One of her granddaughters was as pretty as a peach, whilst to a

connoisseur the other gave promise of something still better than dimpled prettiness.

Into this family Henry Euston—tramp, vagabond, drunkard, a sick stranger—was taken as guest with the tender, exquisite hospitality which, not in the South alone, the poor are quick to extend to the poor.

Chapter II

THE next thing of which he was conscious was the odour of frying bacon. Always after a very long fast it was *drink* that he wanted, not food, and the smell of nourishment irritated him. How was he to get whisky, and where? Where, indeed, was he? And who would fetch him, for pity's sake or charity's, a drink?

He put his hand to his throat, and felt the collar of an unfamiliar garment. He was robed in a woman's nightdress—coarse, but clean.

Through him ran a rush of gratitude to these unknown benefactresses, then the thirst possessed him again, and he sat up and called. Instantly the door was pushed open, as if it had been guarded, and to the incomer, who said in a soft drawl, "Howdy! what does you-all waant?" he couldn't for his soul say "*Whisky.*"

Before him a girl, not much more than a child, regarded him with curious eyes gray as winter seas. The invalid moved his lips.

"Oh! *A drink!*"

The white-trash girl smiled, as though she had accomplished a wonderful feat in discovering his want, nodded, and was gone. Euston sank back, and gasped. At the sound of her return he stared toward the door, as though he expected her to bring him a veritable fountain. She carried a tin cup between her palms, and, coming to the bedside, encircled his shoulder with her arm, and lifted the mug to his lips. His teeth chattered at the edge.

"Drink it all!" commanded the gray-eyed girl.

It was water! He drained it; cold, clear, hard it met his throat.

"More," he begged.

The girl said doubtfully: "Gran'maw sayde you-all kin onl' hev a dipperful mo'."

He drank a fresh supply, and now remarked the little girl with fresh lips, red as berries folded over snow. This was not the angel face he had seen and remembered and been haunted with in feverish dreams. This younger face was oval, thin; from it the hair went back in lustre neither yellow nor auburn, but copperlike—brown with its warmth of the late autumn leaves.

"What is your name?"

"'Manda."

"You've saved my life," he smiled at her; and she acknowledged:

"I reckon we did."

"I hope you won't ever be sorry for it."

"I don't reckon so." And she moved, as if embarrassed, toward the door.

"Didn't I see two of you when you brought me here?"

"Yes, suh; Lily Bud's downstairs helpin' gran'maw."

"Lily Bud!" repeated the tramp. "That's a nice name."

He, too, wanted to be downstairs, and for the first time was glad he had drunk only a harmless dipperful of cold water. But if the girl with the blue eyes would bring some food to him, he thought he could have eaten it.

Over the window an old calico dress hung, blowing out, puffing in the breeze. The light shown through it until it took shape and form, and the limp sleeve grew fuller, the neck rounded out; it matched in colour the ribbon he had pilfered. It was many years since anything so feminine had spoken to Euston. Watching the garment sway and swing in the April air, listening to the voices in the room below, he dozed on the straw mattress.

Save the gray-eyed child, no one came near him. He grew not to care at length who his benefactresses were,

and for days silently ate and drank from the hands of the young girl, scarcely exchanging a syllable with her.

One day he opened his eyes to find her sitting at the head of his bed combing out his hair. He had been conscious of what she was doing long before he gave sign, choosing to prolong the gentle touch—a spell and a caress at once; so he feigned sleep. When he stirred the girl stopped.

“Did Ih hurt you any?”

He smiled and shook his head.

“It’s like knots,” she said. “I reckon you-all will hev to get it *shove* off!”

The same afternoon, just before sun-down, the three women in the kitchen heard a stirring above them. The door opened and shut, followed by steps on the ladder stairs, and a tall man, gaunt as death, pale as a waxen candle, climbed down into the room. As he took his first step into their midst, the women arose from the table, the youngest went forward, straightened her back, and offered her shoulder. He leaned on it, and, thus supported, approached his hostesses, an old woman and a girl about twenty years of age. He was conscious only of the bright blue eyes he had remembered these half-conscious days.

“I have given you a great deal of trouble,” he said in an agreeable, well-modulated voice, “and you’ve been very kind to me.”

The old woman extended her hand to him, and showed toothless gums as she smiled.

“You-all don’t waant to do much walking ’bout, Ih don’t reckon. Set a chair, ’Manda honey. . . . Hev a little sassafras tea?”

They were drinking it out of tin cups, and he took what they offered greedily, trying to forget that he longed to find any other liquor than this flat, nasty drink. There was not much reclining to be done on the straight-backed kitchen chair whereon he sat, but he made himself as comfortable as he could.

“Feel better?”

"Yes; I will be able to tramp on to-morrow."

The old woman gave a chuckling, giggling sound, and its mirth, if mirth it was, did not change one whit the lines of her face. Life had provided a mask which she offered to the world. Half a century and another quarter had lent their art to age. Labour had wrought its part with those instruments of grief and sorrow and pain it knows so well how to employ. Her skin was a dark-tanned hide, wrinkled and furrowed, her mouth a toothless cave. Over her forehead straggled a few strands of white hair. Her head, quite bald on the top, gleamed nude and shining; her neck rose in aged nakedness from the collar of her wrapper.

The man timidly glanced to the elder grandchild. All three women wore cotton wrappers of dark, nondescript colours, but the hideous garment only made more ethereal the face Euston found he remembered and rejoiced to see again. Lily Bud's blue eyes, set far apart, languidly lifted as he looked at her. They possessed that appealing quality which causes a man to respond. A mouth too small, but well shaped, lifted its bud over a chin roundly indented with a dimple. On this very feminine creature the man's eyes rested at first timidly, and then, as Lily Bud made eyes at him, said "Howdy," and gave him with great frankness her hand, he looked with freer delight into her pretty face.

Mrs. Henschley said: "Reckon you-all ain't going to tramp on to-morrer; Henschleys don't let strangers go out of thayr homes to die. Feed you up first. Whar you-all trampin' to?"

"Death," he thought. "Hell—shall I tell her that out frankly?" He put his tin cup on the table.

"I've tramped from New York State. I was in Virginia a while ago. I don't know where I am to-day—South Carolina, I suppose."

"Yes, suh, you is."

There was a pause. If these hill people were curious about him, they gave no such sign. The grandmother stood with her lean old hands on the table, her cuffs

well above her wrists, where the swelling veins stood out like whipcords. She had travelled further than the tramp, although she had never been out of her State.

"Never been norf of Mason and Dixon's line," she said; "don't know much about New York State, though somebody done told me that theyre's much as forty funerals a day in the biggest town up thar. Hush!"—she turned to the girls—"what's that I hyar?"

Amanda, who had stood apart from the group around the table, went over to the window, looked out, and made a nod of salutation as though to someone in the road.

"It's Dex Falloner an' the Griscoms; 'pears though they was all comin' in hyar."

Chapter III

"Oh, show me a little whar I'll fin' a rose,
To give to ma honey chile!
Oh, show me a little whar ma sweetheart goes;
I'll foller her all the while.
Ma honey give me a kiss on the mouth
(An' how kin I let her go?)
I'll foller her Norf, I'll foller her Souf,
To tell her I love her so!

"Oh, what am the colour of ma sweetheart's eyes?
(I'll sing to ma honey chile.)
I reckon she got 'em out o' the skies—
I'll foller her all the while!
Ma honey's hair is yaller gold—
Oh, how kin I let her go?
I love her young, an' I love her old—
I'll foller an' tell her so."

DEXTER FALLONER's advent was heralded by these few notes, as outside the cabin, a banjo on his shoulder, he warbled his serenade. When the door was opened four men who had come over from Daco entered the shanty.

"Howdy, gran'maw."

They shook hands all around, and Mrs. Henchley presented the stranger.

"This hyar gen'leman's a frien' of ours; he's ben remarkable sick—yes, suh, he hez tew!"

With no further history, Euston was cordially accepted by the hill giants. Drawing his chair back until he was hidden in a corner between the kitchen dresser and fire-place, he watched the scene.

The serenader now leaned up against the door, his hands in his pockets, his hat pushed well off his hair. He frankly freed his mouth of tobacco-juice where and

when he saw fit. In a flannel shirt, a loose coat with wide pockets, trousers black-and-white striped, tight at the knees and rising short above the ankles, he was a fair type of the white-trash backwoodsman of yesterday and to-day. A strong race likeness ran through the three young fellows. All were thin-lipped, high-cheek-boned, loosely set up, and barefoot. Two of them—well over six feet—were twins, and so alike as to be objects for continual pleasantries; they were pets of the region, the most popular amongst the "*sports*."

Lily Bud, at one end of the pine table, leaned her elbows on it, and made her hands a cradle for her face. The Henchley girls had been spared the hard work that falls to the backwoods women, for the old Henchley grandmother had immolated herself for her granddaughters.

Lily Bud knew that whichever way she looked she was pretty and agreeable; she had but to keep her eyes on a man a little longer than the natural glance demands, to see him fall her prey.

Cally Griscom, one of the twins, was now at her side, half leaning on the table, with his head as close to hers as he dared put it. She giggled and laughed at his sallies, and the stranger from the corner hated to watch the picture they made.

Amanda was teasing the other twin, and for the first time the ungrateful invalid took opportunity to study his little nurse. She reclined in the one luxurious chair—a Shaker rocker—and from thence delivered a volley of mischievous remarks directed to the young man who grinned at her sheepishly.

Looking from Lily Bud to Amanda, perhaps the younger girl suffered by comparison. Her nose was sharp, on the bridge were little brown freckles that threw her transparent flesh in strong contrast. Her brow, low, and very white, gleamed under the golden-brown bands of her hair. It was her audacious mouth that claimed chief attention. The bow of the upper lip rose clearly defined above the sinking in at the corners.

Under the lower lip, where the milk-white chin lay, was a shadowy indenture, a nest of sweetness. Those lips, smooth as red ivory, moulded for kisses, formed to take and give, now in their innocence were whimsical in expression as Amanda looked up at Griscom. Lily Bud sweetly fulfilled all the indications of prettiness she made, henceforth she would decline; whilst Amanda gavé alluring promise. She said now in her soft drawl:

"If Ih couldn't get a spo't all to maself, I'd be sorry."

"To you'self?" repeated Griscom.

"Yes, suh; Ih ain't goin' to take no man to spo't *me* what's got a double just like him runnin' 'round Daco."

This witticism was greeted by a loud guffaw. It was the custom to look at Lily Bud and to listen to Amanda.

"You-all ain't got no call to talk about spo'tin', 'Manda."

Old Mrs. Henchley had lit her pipe; she stood by the chimney close to Euston, and bent a benevolent smile on the young people. She had at times a radiant expression—the look of old age whose peace has come through renunciation without revolt.

"You-all ain't nothin' but a silly little gyrl, and Ih ain't goin' to have you spile yo'self."

"Little?"

Amanda sprang from her chair. She rose as though shot up by pride, went over to where Dex Falloner leaned by the door. She slipped under the arm he extended to measure her height.

"Whar do Ih come tew?"

"Heart-high."

His arm fell behind her, and he dared to put it around her waist. He bent as if to kiss her. She cried out and struck him, and as he recoiled from her frank blow she ran across the kitchen floor and took refuge behind Euston's chair.

"Don' you-all foller her, Falloner," said Cally Griscom.

"If there's any kissin' doin', I'm beginnin' it."

His brother now stood at the other end of the table.

Falloner took a step forward. The Griscoms watched him cat-like to catch him when he dodged, but he made an unexpected spring forward, leapt into the air, and cleared the table at a bound. It brought him to Amanda's side. She gave a scream of surprised admiration, but before he could put his hands on her both of his arms were pinned from behind by the Griscoms.

"Ugh!" he expostulated, and threw himself violently back on them.

"Drop him thyar, you-all!" cried Amanda. "Two to one ain't squar'."

She gave a little laugh—peculiarly sweet promise of merriment one longed to hear completed—ended by caprice.

"You-all's no more'n *one*, anyhaow! Ih reg'larly cayn't tell *which* on yuh is *whar*!"

Both her hands on the back of Euston's chair trembled. Dex Falloner gave a wicked trip with his right foot, and sent Ned Griscom sprawling. It then was easy work to clear his right arm free of the other, both of whom he flung headlong to one side. Falloner was now close to Amanda. She had seen these skirmishes many times before, and now that all who had struggled for her favours were overcome, according to backwoods' etiquette, Falloner was quite welcome to anything he could get from her! He saw her eyes grow luminous as a cat's, even the gray part of them glowered lurid. She expected, poor child, to fight and scratch in defence of her unmolested treasures—her lips were virgin—but to her surprise the young man took nothing.

"Ih ain't going to kiss no gyrl that-a-way," he said scornfully. "Look what Ih fetched you-all."

From his deep pocket he drew out a pair of quail. They dangled, the poor soft things, in his hand, their weak little heads swinging to and fro. Amanda looked at them and then at him. The old woman, who had allowed their intercourse of courtesy without rebuke, now came forward.

"Gimme them byrds hyar, Dex Falloner. Ih suttinly

am goin' to pick 'em for this hyar sick man. You-all hadn't ought to be in the riot."

She nodded at Euston.

He wanted to disclaim that he was an invalid, but no words came; he was dizzy and weak. Cally Griscom, close by him, was redolent with whisky, and within the invalid rose a man demanding drink. The possessing creature was so powerful that the delicate frame of Euston almost dissolved with effort to keep the fiend invisible. He was in a cold sweat with his dread lest the madman should leap out and proclaim himself.

Dex Falloner bent down to him.

"Pretty weak, suh; you suttinly ain't peart."

He put his arm around Euston, and without leave half lifted him from his chair and fairly carried him upstairs.

He found himself alone in this close room, where he lay gasping with excitement and weakness on his unmade straw bed. A little later Amanda came up with half a quail and a cup of coffee. Heavens, how good it smelt! Famished, parched, he sat up and devoured the food and drink. And instead of leaving him, Amanda sat on the bedside holding the tin cup and plate.

"You-all hadn't ought to of come downstairs—no, suh," she said, looking at him pityingly.

Her hair was rumpled. She gave the little half-laugh characteristic of her, and in this case it meant a friendliness to Euston, as much as to say:

"*I am taking care of you, and I understand you!*"

Possibly she had been pursued again, as she was short of breath, and the pulse beat visibly in her throat. After she had left him he lay quiet for a little while, the craving within him stilled by nourishment. He could hear the sound of the banjo from the kitchen; the table and chairs scraped on the floor as they were pushed aside; then came the shuffling of dancing feet. Amanda's laugh rose agreeably, then Lily Bud's higher tone; this gave him a thrill of pleasure, and thus listening he drowsed until he fell asleep.

Chapter IV

ON in the night he woke to find himself numb, his limbs cold, his outstretched hands damp at the palms. His breath came from him gaspingly, and horror swept over him that Fate had actually met him in this desolate place at the dead of night. He groaned and passed his hand across his forehead; its dew met the moisture of his palm. A few weeks past he had been all too ready to hurry himself out of life; now that death faced him on a sudden it maddened him. It was an unfair advantage thus to take him at his word without warning.

"I have a mind to give the skeleton the slip," he murmured, "to make a last play!"

But it was only the frail physical man which had gone under. Euston's mind was clear as a bell, and to prove his link with life, alongside of his thoughts ran the fury of recurring thirst.

"If I could only have one drink! If there is anything within these four walls I shall find it!"

He managed to get on his feet, slipped into his trousers, and then, barefooted, stole out of his room. The shanty was dark and silent; under his careful tread the rungs of the ladder stairs did not creak at all. Once safely in the kitchen, he shivered, for through the paneless hole in the cabin side the night air, keen and fresh, poured in. With it came the flooding moonlight, and without rose the pines, shadow-like, stirring their feathery tufts in the moonshine.

The poor marauder trembled so violently with weakness that he was forced to cling to the kitchen-table, and there hung panting until his nerves quieted down. He remembered observing the night before something that looked like a bottle on the back of the shelf; but after

Careful inspection of every vessel nothing rewarded his eagerness but some molasses in a jug. He bethought himself of the room from whence old Grandma Henchley had fetched her sassafras tea. But where was the door? The single exit visible was from the shanty into the forest.

As his marauding proceeded he grew physically stronger, and crept cleverly and cat-like close to the wall, sounding the boards for sign of yielding until they creaked loudly under his hand. Palpitating, he listened for some noise to tell him that he had disturbed the house above stairs, and as only silence met him he took courage and pushed hard against the wall. It gave under his pressure; a door opened. There came to him the pungent odour of stacked pine-logs, and together with it unmistakably that other smell, long withheld, long desired! He made an exclamation, a smothered cry; whether of joy or despair, who can say? Life apparently raises no insurmountable barrier to the ruin of souls.

Euston found himself in a low room about twelve feet square. He could just stand upright, and stretching forth both hands, he moved forward in the dark, feeling his way along the wood piles until his hand struck an object of another shape. It was a hogshead. He ran his hand down until his trembling fingers found the bung; it was tight as a rock. Stooping, he felt all around the floor in hope of finding something with which to loosen the plug. Blows with a piece of pine would rouse the house; if he struck the bung out, the liquor would inundate him as it ran past his lips. His groping on the floor was better repaid than he had hoped; his hand fell on a quart bottle. He now gave an audible cry, lifted the object; it was a full whisky-bottle!

At this point may be given to history and romance an incident indicating the true Henry Euston. Any other drunkard than a man of spirit (and beast though he seemed, and was, amongst men, spirit he had), any other drunkard than a man of value would have uncorked

the fire, and then and there burned himself, soul and body, to hell. In spite of his tense desire, Euston paused to reflect.

A quart of whisky was in his clutch; if he drank it all in his weak condition it would probably kill him. If it chanced not to eat the life out of him he would lie sodden drunk, a disreputable midnight thief in the house of his benefactors; or, worse horror even, he might go insane, and who could say what that hideous outcome might be?

Clasping his precious find, he groped his way back, his heart sick with excitement. He laid his plans quickly. He would slip out of the house to the woods, there quench his thirst; once under the roof-tree he would be indifferent to the result. He made considerable noise in regaining the kitchen, stopped short, for, standing at the foot of the ladder stairs, short-petticoated, bare-foot, was Amanda. She had a candle in her hand. Euston, transfixed at the sight, clutched the whisky-bottle in his arms.

The girl put the candle on the kitchen table and came straight to him.

"What's you-all ahfter?"

Her voice was low and determined. A man could not have been more fearless; she might as well have addressed a wild beast as this individual!

"After what you see—whisky, and I tell you to go away and leave me. I'm not myself; I am going to drink this if it means hell!"

His voice was dropped to the lowest whisper. In all the weeks she had known him she had never heard it rough before.

Amanda's coarse night-gown was short-sleeved. She had put a skirt on over it; her arms were bare.

"You ain't goin' to do nothin' of the kine. Gimme that bottle!"

Euston chuckled. The inhuman sound terrified her. He ran past where she was standing, hugging close his treasure. But Amanda was too quick for him. She

darted across the room and threw herself before the door, planting her back firmly against it. Thus she faced him, with both hands on her hips, though now Euston was close to her, his breath on her very face. She never let herself remember him as she saw him then; the sight would have haunted her for life—drooping eyelids, pallid cheeks, uncombed hair. She stared straight into the eyes devoid of intelligence until she forced them to open wide upon her.

"You-all ain't goin' out o' hyar. I'm goin' to watch ef et's all night."

Euston, thus magnetized, opened wide his eyes, expelling hidden furies that nesting might well have hatched crime. He met the full gaze of the young girl; it controlled him and exorcised his fiend.

He drew back a pace from her, moistening his lips.

She said severely:

"I wouldn't hev thought you-all was this kynd! Gran'maw and Lily Bud, they sayde, 'Watch out fo' him!' But I thought suttinly that you wasn't no spy, no, suh!"

"I'm not."

"You air so," she contradicted, rejoicing at the opportunity he gave her to gain time. "You-all come from north o' Mason an' Dixon's line. You come for to spy onto us. We ain't feard, though. To-morrow thayre wouldn't be no smell o' whisky this yer twelve miles; 'n Ih was to tell the boys, why, I reckon thayre suttinly wouldn't be no sign o' you-all, to show for what you speak."

Euston drew back against the table. He put the bottle down, scarcely hearing the threats and reproaches. Not removing his look from her, however, he covered the cork with his right hand, and drew it. It came out with a sharp creak. The sound indicated the removal of the last thing between him and the assuaging of his thirst. The fluid was at his very lips when the bottle, snatched from his hands before he could prevent it, was flung with sure aim through the open window. It

fell somewhere out in the road, far from immediate use.

Whether he struck her, or threw her, at all events Amanda fell with a cry, and the first thing Euston realized she was lying across the threshold in front of the door through which he would have to pass in order to regain his booty. His deed brought him completely to himself. He exclaimed aloud in disgust:

"My soul, what am I?" and stood trembling, bending over her, a horror-stricken, a respectable being at last.

The young girl half lifted herself and raised her hand to her head.

"They'll be down hyar, gran'maw an' Lily Bud; they'll put you-all aout."

"Can you forgive me? . . . God knows how sorry I am! Where did I hurt you?" He lifted her up on to her feet. "Hush!"

They stood facing each other, immovable, waiting for the appearance at least of Lily Bud on the ladder, or for indication that the others were roused. There was no such warning, and Amanda took her ungrateful guest by the arm.

"You-all go up to bayde," she whispered authoritatively.

His fingers worked, his eyes could scarcely see her; they were filled with tears. But instead of obeying he went over and half fell into the rocking-chair under the window.

It was not the first bottle that had been flung far from him. His own hand had flung them more than once. Amanda, still unafraid of him, although she could not have told why, came slowly to him. He lifted his face, ghastly white in the blended moonlight and candle-light. His hands trembled so, that in order to control them he clasped the sides of the rocking-chair. His expression was tense and beseeching.

"Let me go out and get it," he breathed. "You don't know what I'm suffering. You have no right to take

this from me. I can't tell you what lengths I shall be driven to. I—must—have—a drink!"

Each word was a command and a prayer in itself. Amanda stood apparently unmoved.

"You-all ain't fit to drink," she nodded practically. "That liquor would kill you; et's the powerfulest liquor in the South."

Seeing his face so working, she continued

"If you want to get it, you'll hev to go out over me. I'm nothin' but a gyrl; I can't fight you-all. Yo' kin suttinly git out over me, I reckon."

She knew he would not.

Thus again she regarded him fixedly, with power hard to explain. She gave him a little encouraging nod of tenderness and friendliness, as though she said:

"Come, be a man! Don't knock me down! Listen to me: save yourself;" and she saw his face soften perceptibly.

It could not be said to weaken, although it bore indications of emotion almost womanish. Euston put both hands over his quivering features. When he removed them she was still standing quietly in front of him.

"Go upstairs, and let me sit here awhile."

His voice was once more the voice she knew. Her heart beat again more calmly; she was so glad. She drew a chair up and sat herself down.

"Ih ain't goin' to leave you; like's not you'd forage some mo'."

"I won't leave this chair!"

Now the old mischievous gleam shone in her eyes; they twinkled.

"Ih suttinly don' trus' ducks with water!"

As she crossed her arms he saw that she winced.

"Oh! . . . did I hurt you much?"

"Et don't matter."

And he said no more. The deed was beyond apology or pardon. To bruise that kind little thing who had served him so well! In his frenzy thus to reward his little nurse! With all his blighted career behind him he

could frankly say he had never felt so degraded as at this instant.

"I will go on up then. I ought not to keep you down here."

"Thet don't matter," she repeated cheerfully. "I'm like as not to prow' 'roun' mase'f. Sometimes I walk out—ef et's a pretty night. Now, to-night, jest 'fore I hyard you-all rampin' 'roun' down hyar, I was lookin' through the windy, an' I seen the moon. Seemed like et sayde: "'Manda—'Manda Henchley, I'm out! Whar's your manners, gyrl, to le' me all alone?'" She laughed, subdued and sweetly; her bare feet swung to and fro. After a moment she said: "You-all ain't goin' to 'form th' 'thorities on grand'maw?"

"How can you believe it of me?" he exclaimed. "What's the harm, anyway, of whisky in your own house?"

She observed him keenly, threw her head back, and laughed again.

"No harm? Suttinly there ain't. Why, et's a 'spensary—State law! We'd all go to gaol. You kin put all us thayre. . . ."

And Amanda eyed her visitor, who said:

"I'm no informer, and you know it. But if you'll give me one drink of whisky I'll stand by you all my life."

The girl's eyes grew large. Over her folded arms she bent her head and chest forward, and said in a deep whisper:

"Ih wouldn't get it for you—no, not ef yo' was to gimme a silk dress, and thayre ain't nothin' in the world that I want worse nor thet; an' ef you starts up to git thet bottle, I'll yell for gran'maw. Yes, suh, Ih will so. Ih ain't never goin' to let yo' drink—nevah, nevah!"

Euston was impressed. The words seemed to possess a superstitious meaning as they came to him across the distance between them. She leaned forward, fixing on him a look clear as the moonlight in which her figure was delicately defined.

No woman had ever spoken like this to him: Scandalous scenes in which drink had formed part of the night's dual carouse were easy to recall, but there was no parallel to this.

The hill-girl was scantily dressed. Her young lithe-ness imparted to her a rather boyish appearance, and her unconsciousness of sex, her perfect confidence in him, a singular charm. As she spoke her head was lifted, and the flesh of her neck, white as snow, soft as satin, gleamed through the open collar of her night-dress down to the gently-swelling breast raised by her folded arms.

"Why do you care what I do?"

"I dunno."

She leaned back, relieved of her fear.

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen. How old be you-all?"

"Twenty-five."

She was good, this humble, ignorant child; she was kind and she was pure. There was no sentiment in his feeling toward Amanda. The fact that he was alone with her in the night, that she was in his power, did not cross his mind. He was too devoured by his other passion, too reduced in vitality by his struggle. He sank back in the Shaker chair; his hands relaxed their clutch of the arms; he closed his eyes.

When he was quite sound asleep Amanda stole from the kitchen out into the road, found the whisky-bottle, hid it safely, completely, and returned to her charge.

She was cold, now that she could think of herself. She shook with chilliness, for the moon had set behind the pines, and as the night grew darker the air blew through the open window icily on them both. She drew the heavy shutter to as well as she could, but it still left a wide opening which she could not fasten.

Not daring to get bed-covering from upstairs lest she should arouse Lily Bud, she slipped between the sleeping man and the open window, and thus standing, she made a screen for him till dawn, and then in the early morning she woke him, shaking him to consciousness.

Horror of the night had fled with the shadows, but instead fingers of weariness, disgust, and shame lifted Euston's eyelids. With compunction he saw Amanda standing before him, wan with her vigil.

"Come," she said, "let's go to bayde."

He rose without speaking, and when they had reached the ladder's foot he took her hand, lifting up her arm that he might see where he had hurt her. Brutal and distinct showed out a long bruise against the flesh. He muttered a curse upon himself.

"Et's reg'larly nothing at all," she whispered eagerly. "You-all didn't go fer to do et."

Her teeth chattered as she spoke, and he saw her shiver with cold. Euston said fiercely:

"Go upstairs. Get rested, and cover up warm. I'm a brute. God knows how sorry I am!"

From wrist to elbow he gently passed his hand all along the blue bruise, as though to ask its pardon.

At the touch a current instantly rose, as in harmony with a magnetic tide; a wave of red starting from the girl's heart suffused her body. Her companion neither saw nor knew the blush's existence, nor did he dream that greater than his mad blow and the visible bruise was the smiting of Amanda's nature on that night to life.

She followed him up the ladder, stole to her usual place by Lily Bud's side, glowing like a flame.

Chapter V

THE crude morning, rushing its chariots through miles of pines, over hills and uncleared forests, flashed against Henchley's, and the open window of Euston's room gave it free access. The daylight commanded him to awaken, to recommence the battle for an existence he valued very little. He would have been glad to escape out of the window and take his leave unperceived from these people who had restored him to a world for which he had no use, but as he opened his eyes a salutary thought, the first affirmatively good feeling he had known for a long time, came to him. At the realization that this morning might have seen him a murderer, and that he was saved, gratitude filled him. "Thank God!" he exclaimed, and with this on his lips he rose from his bed.

In the kitchen below he found Mrs. Henchley, moving about in the dense smoke of ham and frying bacon; whilst Lily Bud, who never did any work she could avoid, sat idly by the table. The oldest Miss Henchley rarely addressed Euston, but contented herself with casting soft and well-aimed glances at him from under her lashes. So far each look had found its mark.

"'Manda's got a tetch of chills," grandmaw said through the smoke. "'Pears like the child was going to shake us all out of bayde. Pore little thing! She ain't been subject to 'em, neither. You-all feelin' peart, suh?"

With fresh qualms of conscience at the news, he expressed regret at Amanda's indisposition, and said that, as far as he was concerned, he could be tramping on this day.

"Whar you-all live to?" Lily Bud asked him this. Euston smiled faintly.

"Nowhere; just getting along South to look up my family. I think I have relations somewhere about this region."

Whereupon, over bacon and coffee, a confab followed between grandmaw and Euston relating to family names and places. As Euston listened to the old backwoods woman with interest, knives and forks lay idle, the stove grew cold, smoke settling anew on the bare wood walls, and on their plates the bacon-grease stiffened.

"Henchley's suttinly an English name; we're right from the English—'thaout a break,' ma husban' tole me. Ma husban' were no pine-ear, he sayde—he done sprung from England; but they'd *lit* 'fore his day. He wuz a woodsman, an' twell he took on other bizness late into his life, he done made quite some money. He suttinly prob'ly would of built on to this hyar shanty ef he'd of stuck to tree-choppin'——"

"The other bizness," Euston supposed, was illicit whisky-making.

"Tom Henchley were a clean man," continued his old wife; "'n' when they knocked up these hyar little Godforsaken doin's, 'n' called 'em *haouses* all thro' the hills, Tom, he-all sayde tew me, 'I'm goin' t' build a haouse, 'n' leave the panes (pens) t' th' pigs;' 'n' thet's haow we got a three-room dwellin' set out hyar in th' woods. Folks roun' hyar reg'larly thinks Henchley's set up fer show!" She looked round her with pride.

Euston, following her eyes, saw the unplastered walls, that smoke had blackened and discoloured, the bareness of the scantily-furnished interior, and the woman's pride appeared pathetic indeed.

"Back hyar to Forkstown thayr ain't a shanty but whar the folks dew sleep all to one room. When ma darter died hyar, 'n' lef' me these two little gyrls, Ih sayde to him, 'Ih cayn't dew nothin' fer 'em but to teach 'em manners 'n' to wash thayr faces.' Thayr naver was fer to say much work they-all cud dew hyar."

She displayed as she spoke her enormous knotted hands. Alongside of them, as she spread them out, Lily Bud's were soft as snow. "So Ih jest clars up 'n' cooks 'n' gardens, 'n' lets the gyrls grow." On the ungrateful plot of ground at the shanty's side she had raised all the vegetables that had nourished the household for thirty years. Her ancient eyes travelled to the lounging figure of her pretty granddaughter. "Sometimes," she continued, "Ih dew reckon Ih ain't worked 'em 'nough. All Ih ever ast o' 'Mandy and Lily Bud was to act pretty 'n' look pretty."

It was many years since Euston had been so long sober. After this month of tranquillity and normal living his mind was clear and active; he had straightened himself to listen to the old woman with most polite attention. Meanwhile Lily Bud languished her fatalest glance at him. At her grandmother's last words she drawled in a soft undertone, "Ih ain't pretty much," which statement she expected to have contradicted; and she was not disappointed.

Euston exclaimed:

"You? Why, you're pretty as a picture!" And they both blushed.

"Yo' from the Norf, sub?" Mrs. Henchley asked her first personal question with a note of exquisite softness in her voice, an apology for the directness of the point.

"Yes, I came from New York here."

"I'd like po'ful to see it," mused the old creature. "Seems like a dream, them parts. I'm po'ful fon' o' foran travel, on'y I ain't hed much 'casion fer it."

Euston, spurred on by her intelligent curiosity and by the fact that Lily Bud listened intently, talked of the North, and, quite astonished at his own ready flow of words and his power to depict and describe, held his simple audience spellbound.

At the beginning of breakfast he sat opposite to her, but as the morning wore on he found himself close to her side, addressing his tale to Lily Bud directly.

He recalled to himself with sentiment that it was *her* pink ribbon whose little fluttering flag and human indication had saved his life by the pond that day; it was her pink dress he had watched blow in and out before his window for many days past. Rescued as he had been by sentiment from an obscure, cowardly death of a suicide: cleansed for a time of much degradation, it was not strange, that equal with his gratitude, should awaken a tender affection which easily attached itself to those nearest at hand benefactors; only, with the irony of fate, he had selected the wrong peg to hang his sentiment upon!

Euston forgot that this girl was dressed in a scanty cotton gown. She was young: youth lay along the contour of her smooth cheek; her hands were small and dimpled. She was a woman, the first woman of whom he had thought for long—long; and, healed by his fast of a little of his disease, he was growing rapidly like other men; his natural, normal, vigorous manhood was stirring in him again. He wanted to please and entertain this Desdemona of the hills, and when her attention was most keenly rivetted on him, a knock at the shanty door made them all start. They had been too absorbed in Euston's story to hear a buggy drive up in the soft sand road.

Dexter Falloner was again a caller at Henschley's, but this time he came with no fellow beaux; he had driven over from Daco a stranger whom he now ushered into the kitchen—a man in store-clothes—boiled shirt and derby hat, a flashy tie, a pair of gloves; to the eyes of all save Euston a gentleman.

"Well, howdy-all!" Falloner's cheerful voice and look took them all in. "Whayr's 'Mandy?"

"Hill fever," said her grandmother.

Her suitor's face lengthened. He had driven over more in hopes of seeing the girl than in any interest in the stranger's affair.

"This hyar's a Mister Bachman, mam." He presented the guest. "He suttingly would come over hyar

tew Henchley's. 'Pears like he's heard o' your gyrls, gran'maw."

Was this a seeker after her granddaughter's hand in marriage? The old woman looked at the man imperturbably. She smoked one or two calm puffs on her pipe, and nodded at him.

"Hev a cheer, suh."

The stranger nervously dropped into one.

"Yes, ma'm," he said in a brisk Yankee twang. "I've been all over Daco on a little business, and I wanted to see the real hill-folks—a real hill dwelling." He took in the whole room at a cursory glance. "Sleep here?"

The old woman, whose manners were so different in texture and quality from this vulgar son of the North, now ceased to look at him with friendly eyes. She looked past him.

"Yaas, suh,"—she exaggerated her drawl; "all sleeps hyar, on the kitchen table, all on us: ma gran'-datters, this hyar gennelman, 'n' mase'f. We tak' turns sleepin' on th' flo'."

She puffed a cloud of smoke; it looked angry, but her calm old face was unmoved.

Bachman saw he was being made fun of.

"They've bin showin' me rooms where eighteen sleep all together, ma'm," he explained apologetically. "I'm prepared for anything."

"Then I reckon I won't trifle any o' ma surprise pahtys on to you-all, suh," the old woman said coolly.

But her sarcasm and unfriendly eyes were no damper to the coarse spirits of Emanuel Bachman. He laid his hat on the table and his gloves on it, and thrust his hands between his waistcoat and trousers band, and, leaning back his chair, cheerfully addressed the forbidding old woman.

"Why, I guess you've all of you heard of Rexington? Great place, elegant city, big buildings, and heaps of stores; elegant hotels and all sorts of conveniences. Well, I guess you've heard of Mr. Grismore too, haven't

you now? No? Not you, sir? My sakes! Well, he's a millionaire!"

Falloner had seated himself on the last rung of the ladder stairs. Up in the loft Amanda had stolen from her bed, and crouched listening, unseen, to the unusual goings-on in the kitchen. When the millionaire's great name had, to Bachman's thinking, sufficiently penetrated his audience, he went on:

"Yes, ma'm, Jacob Grismore's a big benefactor to the South. He's a Northerner, and he's bringing down all his capital and his talent into the South." If Bachman had described the advent of a high-souled missionary to the wilds of heathendom, he would have employed the same tone. "Mr. Grismore has bought up the old cotton-mills, where they were trying to run the concern with nigger labour, and he is going to turn them into elegant mills. He expects to ship his cotton cloth to the four quarters of the globe." Thus was the dazzling commercial and financial scheme of a corporation brought crudely into the backwoods' midst. "Yes, *sir*," went on the young man to Euston, whose non-committal interest he found more yielding soil than the hard rock of Mrs. Henschley's unflinching indifference. "And he's built beautiful little village settlements around his mills, six- and eight-room dwellings; white-washed, painted; St. George ranges; elegant glass panes to the windys."

Not one word of this was truth. Schemes for such miniature palaces were, indeed, in the prospects of future mill properties, as yet thin air. Grandmaw Henschley puffed her pipe in unmollified silence. Not to disturb this flow of conversation, she moved softly away; but ruthlessly, too, she picked up one by one the breakfast plates, and cleared them off with a knife, throwing the bits of the victuals into the stove. Mr. Bachman took in the rags of the man opposite.

"There's money to be made in Rexington, you bet your life," he said pointedly; "and store-clothes for gentlemen and silk dresses for ladies. There's an elegant

store on Bridge Street where a lady can purchase everything from a ribbon to a baby-carriage!" He laughed coarsely; no one had spoken thus far but himself. He had not reached the pith of his argument; he was undisturbed by the cool silence. "Now, what Mr. Grismore wants"—he leaned forward confidently—"is to fill his mills with first-class operators at good wages—good money for good work. He's going to open up the South manufactures and its progress. Man,"—he edged away from Mrs. Henschley, who was near him, with the coffee-pot held awry as though she might in her total ignoring him sprinkle him with it—"it's civilization!"

Mrs. Henschley held aloft the coffee-pot.

"Whar's et progressin' tew?" she asked drily.

Bachman paused.

"Why," he said glibly, "to wealth and fame, and——"

"Fer this hyar millionaire," she pursued.

"For everybody," he hurried, a little taken aback by the posers. "Why, picture one of them elegant six-room dwellin's—besides—besides——" He looked around for a simile.

"I ain't good at drawin' picters," said Mrs. Henschley. "This hyar cabin's ben good 'nough fer me fer thirty years."

Bachman went on bravely: "Over to Daco the boys and girls come to me like flies to honey. I spent a couple of hours with Mr. Falloner, and he gathered no less than fifteen who are all going to Rexington with me to-morrow."

"What fer to dew?"

"To work in Mr. Grismore's mills—to come back ladies and gentlemen."

A girl's voice timidly asked here, "Does they-all hev tew work hyard?"

Bachman looked on, delighted at this exhibition of interest in an eligible "hand."

Tales of other countries, the stories of life and amusement, the scenes just painted for them by Euston,

had been assailing her young ears all the morning. For the first time life had entered the shanty with Euston's advent. He was, in spite of his rags and misery, different from the people she had hitherto seen. She was restless and ready for existence. Silk dresses, ribbons, money, all suddenly shaken before her eyes dazzled her poor little brain. She must breathe or stifle to death. Her cheeks were red, her eyes sparkled. Before Bachman could reply to her question, Euston spoke:

"You are engaging hands for mill work?"

"Yes, sir."

"What are the hours?"

"Well," hesitated Bachman, too clever to tell the truth to these free children of the woods, "Mr. Grismore ain't scheduled out his time just yet."

He spoke sharply, as much as to say, "You're a pretty one to ask about hours of labour!" And Euston, remarking his irritability, and laying it to his rags and unprepossessing appearance, did not press the subject, but said quietly:

"I'll go with you, if you like."

"First-rate!" nodded Bachman, his eyes on the girl.

"'N' I'll go with you-all tew," she said excitedly.

Grandmaw Henschley was over at her dresser; she turned like a flash, opened her lips, then shut them tight. Bachman looked over at her.

"How's that, ma'm—all right?"

The tanned hide of her face paled; her mouth was wrapped in a mass of wrinkles that, like a mail, protected its natural expression from the eyes of the world.

"Ma gran'datter's gone twenty-one," she said slowly. "Her maw done went away from me 'thaout astin'; she kin dew's she's a mind."

And Lily Bud's mind was pretty sure to do the selfish, vain, capricious thing. She never looked at her grandmother. Before her fancy were the brilliant dreams she had so long desired; now they were to take form. As for Euston, he only thought it was in his case a chance

for life. Here, under the table, Lily Bud slipped out her hand, and took his as it lay on his knee. He was surprised, and his heart beat faster as he clasped the soft hand.

Bachman said: "Well, ma'm, we are getting along. Ain't you got another pretty granddaughter?"

For response old Mrs. Henschley went over to the foot of the ladder, and called sharply up, "'Manda!"

She had no need to repeat the call; a crouching figure at the ladder's head rose to sight, and Amanda came down into the kitchen. She was now in the fever following her chill; her cheeks were brilliant, her mouth parched, and her eyes, gray and bright as stars, shone from beneath her disordered hair. She was enveloped in an old shawl her grandmother had wrapped around her hours before. Dex Falloner let her pass him on the ladder without speaking to her, and she came over toward the stove, where her grandmother waited for her, still holding the coffee-pot in her hand. This pertinacious clinging to an object for the last half-hour was the only evidence she gave of her excitement, and there was no one there to read these neurasthenic signs. Amanda cast a look of frank dislike at the strange man.

"Ih hyard you!" she snapped at him. "You suttinly kin spout, suh. What you-all with me, grandmaw?"

The woman, who had been father, mother, and family to these two orphan children for the space of their lives, felt, as she heard Amanda's voice so antagonistic to Mr. Grismore's emissary, a soothed sense that all the earth was not trembling from a hideous shock of ingratitude. Her voice was tender, despite its raised tone, as she said:

"Ih want you-all should hev a chance t' go to th' miells, t' git a silk dress, 'n t' hep Mistah Grismore civilize hisself."

The figures of the old woman and the young girl stood side by side.

"She's a little cat!" Bachman thought. "She's got claws!"

Amanda cast a glance on the pair sitting by the kitchen table; under it she could see the clasped hands. No sight in all her young, untried life had ever given her such a cruel pain. Euston couldn't look toward her for very shame with recollections of the previous night, and Lily Bud was supremely unconscious of her; so Amanda's steady, staring disgust was unhindered.

"Yo' sistah 'n' Mr. Euston goin' to the cotton-miells, honey," said her grandmother. "Does you-all want t' go tew?"

Still staring at the lovers, the child asked:

"'N' whose goin' ter stay along of you-all?"

"Waal," said the old woman, clasping the tin pot, "I seen some few days fo' you wuz bo'n, 'n' I reckon I don't disremember how I put 'em thro'!"

There was no melodrama in Amanda's intense and deeply-feeling nature. Under her shawl and over her aching little heart she folded her arms tightly.

"I'm suttinly goin' t' stay." And with the words she removed her look from the young people, and to the older generation she raised her eyes with a pitiful appeal, as though she besought . . . "From selfish youth and blind passion I turn to you! You have known all of life—have worn it well—you will teach me how to endure, how to renounce! . . ."

But the imperfect vision of her grandmother saw nothing of this, and her controlled features revealed nothing of the triumph she felt in Amanda.

She said sharply, with delighted resumption of authority: "Well, you git straight away upstairs t' bayde, 'n' I'll carry you up some sassafras tea."

Amanda turned obediently, and as her figure in the gray shawl passed Dex he whispered:

"Say, 'Manda, I ain't goin' t' Rexington neither. Damn him 'n' his mills tew!"

That night there was no sleep possible for her, and at length, being devoured by the heat of her fever, she said to Lily Bud:

"I'm po'ful dry, 'n' I'm goin' daounstairs t' git a drink o' watter."

The kitchen looked just as it had the night before, when, at the risk of her life, she had wrestled with Euston and his fiend, but clouds were hiding the moon, and the room was dark. Not daring to linger lest the cold air should bring on a new chill, she poured out a dipper of water, and drank it greedily, and then climbed back to the loft.

At the top Euston was standing; she could discern his figure, although she could not see his face. Perhaps he is meditating another forage? However, she went on, but not past him, for he caught her by the hand, and in another second both arms were around her. Before she knew what had been done, his lips met hers—hers went to his without resistance, and clung. Never did woman's lips meet man's more utterly, more completely, than in this second. In the first kiss of her life the ardent, primitive little creature gave to him all.

Her lips were smooth and soft; cooled with the fresh water that had so greatly refreshed them, they were like flowers humid with morning. Euston drank from them a draught such as he had never dreamed to taste. One long embrace, and she had slipped from his arms, and before he could speak or find his voice she had disappeared in the door of her room.

Chapter VI

THE fringe of the outskirts of REXINGTON was so be-draggled and frayed—it had trailed in the dirt so long—that no amount of mending could have restored it: it needed to be cut off clean. On its extreme edge a tenement known as RADNOR'S tavern—a two-story, wooden building, offered shelter to the hordes of strangers who trooped in from all parts of the country at the opening of the new cotton-mills. These labour-seeking individuals were sometimes discontents, drifting hither and thither, from mill town to mill town, seeking—poor wretches!—better pay and better conditions. But the largest portion was the “hill-folks” or “poor white trash.” Early settlements of these indigenous Americans decamped from the forest and hill-country within the vicinity of REXINGTON, and drifted down, in hopes to exchange their hitherto colourless existences; to break the monotony of their sequestered, unproductive lives; to touch money with hands some of which had never felt the mint-struck metal; to proclaim themselves a part of the civilization, so-called, which gives in exchange for the bodies and blood and sinew of the worker wider experience—testing of the powers to endure new forms of suffering; the close proximity of the law; the inexorable demand of decent, orderly living, and the ambition of the neighbourly struggle, evidence of the American desire to excel.

RADNOR'S had overflowed with work-seekers for weeks past. Overseers brought relays in from distant mountain regions; strikers from Georgia and Alabama arrived singly and in bands. Owing to a lock-out in one mill-town, seven hundred hands arrived at once. RADNOR

took all he could crowd together. In twenty-four hours the several mills had swallowed up the army of dissatisfied toilers, who, in the face of new and untried conditions, were once again hopeful in the struggle.

On this morning the buggy of Mr. Grismore drove through Rexington at an uncommonly early hour. The slender wheels rattled lightly over the cobbles; the bright copper discs flashed on the horses' ears. Driving for him, with strong, capable hands, was his wife.

The manufacturer sat comfortably back smoking his cigar, and unconsciously expanding with his own importance, and in the knowledge that South Carolina was all for him. He valued public opinion enormously and intended to keep it just where it was in his case. He touched his hat to the people he passed, although at this hour only tradesmen were astir. Mr. Grismore represented what the South needs—Northern capital and push in the person of a man whose sympathies are not antagonistic. Grismore's father had fought on the Confederate side, and he himself so closely concealed his prejudices and politics that they were not clearly understood. Other people fought about them; Grismore never discussed them.

Money expended by him in this part of the country had bought all the adjoining land around the town, intending little by little, as his enterprises paid, to raze the present mill and construct a new. At this date existed the old Crompton, and a smaller mill, the Janet.

Grismore's faculties were all employed in the making of money, but his heart belonged unreservedly to the woman by his side.

"Turn here," he said, "down to Radnor's. I shall be detained an hour or so looking over the people Bachman has brought from the hills."

They drove up, and stopped a little way from the door of the hostel; alongside of the neat buggy stood a refuse-cart driven by a negro, and drawn by a skeleton horse.

"Let me wait here for you," his wife said. "It's a good time to satisfy my curiosity about the emigrants."

Negroes mingled their dusky forms with their white brothers, scarcely less spruce or well-to-do. Everything that moved went indolently, languidly, as if the strength of the people had been spent already in history, sapped in the annals of its war, and a new birth, a new fusion, alone could awaken life.

There were more stragglers astir this morning than usual; it was the custom of the hang-about to gather at the arrival of the new hands.

Mrs. Grismore, holding the reins in one hand and her parasol in the other, leaned back, and regarded the scene before her eyes.

The tavern-keeper hurried forward to greet them, bowed several times with the courtesy of a Southerner, and almost salaamed to the great man himself.

"Your people are hyar, suh—some dozen of them. They are all on their feet but one." It was well-known that Radnor found means to evade the State dispensary law, and furnished dry throats with needful liquor.

Grismore glanced at the pioneer group before his eyes, and said jocosely to the landlord:

"Well, I hope you have not filled those people up with fusil-oil?"

Radnor grinned and exclaimed with alacrity:

"I reckon *I* couldn't teach them anything about whisky-making."

"What's the matter with the man who's not on his feet?"

"Oh, well," said Radnor, "I reckon he's got a little touch of hill fever."

Meanwhile the eyes of the woman were fixed on what she saw before her, drawn by the Master of Life and Death. The band of silent, waiting human beings were a tribe of representative men and women of the hills, factors in a great scheme, fresh material to be ground up, used up, and devoured by machines, offered to the Moloch of Labour. Their hue was of the earth; they partook of the yellow tone of the sandy soil from which they sprung. Their clothes were homespun cotton-

print gowns, of nondescript colours. The women, graceless and awkward, were hatless. Those who boasted any head-covering whatsoever wore sun-bonnets. Many of them had no possessions in the world but the clothes on their backs.

There were small girls of tender age—less than fifteen—in this group, but no children; there were men and maidens, brothers and sisters, and those who had no close relationship. The men, shambling and loosely set together, were, nevertheless—one or two—a little above the average in height and strength. Their clothes were coverings for them, little more. Many, too, were hatless.

How were they going to get to Crompton? It was four miles away.

Her eyes, dim with pity, wandered to the hotel, where, against the wall of the house, a man was leaning. He lurched forward several times; twice she thought he would fall forward on his face. He must be very ill, poor creature! This man wore the remains of a felt hat, pulled well down over his brow. Once he looked up and caught the sympathy and pity on the face of the woman in the carriage. Even through his drunken stupor the human look touched him. He tried to straighten himself; pulled at his collar, settled his hat a little. It was pitiful. Grismore leaned out of the buggy, his cigar between his fingers. He glanced at the man by the hotel door, then at Radnor suspiciously.

“Knocked out! What’s the matter? I told Bachman I didn’t want any invalids or broken-down people.”

“Reckon it’s a touch of hill fever with him.”

“Does he drink?”

“Well, sir, I declare to you——” hurriedly began the hotel-keeper.

Grismore cut him short.

“Look here, Radnor: you understand my methods, don’t you? If you corrupt my hands, you get right out of Rexington.”

This threat, made in an undertone, was supposed to

be audible to Radnor alone. But the man leaning against the side of the hotel felt he was made the subject of conversation, and came forward with an uncertain step, which he vainly tried to steady. Mr. Grismore, who had got out of his buggy, approached the group of labourers. He disliked coming in contact with his hands; he employed sufficient bosses and overseers to spare him proximity with this class. He was of English descent, and noble ancestry, and had the inherent hatred of the people. None of the gentler, more subtle traditions had reproduced themselves in this man, but class distinction was strong in him.

"Look here,"—he addressed the group of new hands collectively,—“I suppose you all understand from my superintendent what you are here for? Just over there”—he nodded to the distance—“are the new mills. I have fixed up decent houses for you; I shall pay you good money. In return you are to give me your time and work conscientiously.” His words sounded well to him. He looked from face to face of the simple, primitive men and women, who in return fastened on him their fascinated eyes. The word “conscientious” had a good sound; he repeated it; “Conscientiously. You’re a strong, good-looking lot of people, and I guess you will like the mills. I want you to understand right here that I don’t hire loungers and lazars, and the first man or woman who is found with whisky in my settlement gets themselves shipped. . . .”

When this threat sufficiently penetrated the group, who one and all came from the whisky-distilling region, Mr. Grismore turned to Euston.

“As for you,” he dismissed him brutally, “there’s no work here for you, sir.”

The man had difficulty in finding his voice.

“I was engaged to work in your mills by your overseer. I have come to Rexington . . . for work. . . . I am going to have it.”

The manufacturer looked from the tattered shoes to the weather-stained hat with acute disdain.

"Work! You are a pretty specimen to talk of work! Why, I don't believe you've ever done an honest day's labour in your life! I don't fill my mills with drunken vagabonds." The man tried to speak here, but could not make the words come. "You'll find no work in my mills; there's nothing but occupation for decent, sober people." He looked once more toward the group of hands. "You are all down here now in a civilized, order-loving country. You look after your morals, and I will look after your wages. As for you, my fine fellow, the kindest thing we can do for you is to have you locked up, and let you sleep yourself into a decent state."

The scarlet from the man's lips appeared to run over his pale cheeks. His eyes grew dark, and the brilliancy died out of them. He said quickly:

"You have finished haranguing your hands, sir, and I beg to tell you that you have finished haranguing me."

The hotel-keeper did not understand the man's words, but the tone was perfectly comprehensible, so he stepped insolently up to him.

"Look here; do you know who you are talking to? That's Mr. Grismore."

"I hope never to speak to Mr. Grismore again," said the man distinctly, "and I forbid him to speak to me."

There were certain qualities in Euston that never quite went back on him. He felt his head clearing and strength returning at the treatment. He edged toward the group of hill people. On the edge of the crowd stood a girl in a neat dress and a white sun-bonnet. He motioned to her with an authoritative gesture of his hand. If she had been a bird moving in response to a magnetic call, Lily Bud could not have come forward more instantly. Radnor stepped between the advancing girl and the stranger.

"You quit meddling with Mr. Grismore's people! And you go back with the others, my girl!"

But his portly frame was pushed aside by an arm

strengthened through desperate fury. Euston took Lily Bud by the shoulder.

"*This man*," he said to her, "has refused to give me work in his mills. There are plenty of other mills in the South; there is a mill right here in this town. I am going to get work in it; you must go with me."

Grismore addressed the hotel-keeper.

"Will you stop this disgraceful performance? Will you take this fellow in charge, Radnor?"

"Certainly, Mr. Grismore—certainly." But he made no step toward the fellow; instead, he said persuasively to Lily Bud: "Now you go over there to the mills with your friends, if you know what's good for you."

The terrified backwoods girl shook her head.

The manufacturer said furiously to Euston:

"What right have you to entice this woman?"

And Euston, leaning on Lily Bud's shoulder, made no reply, while to the girl he said:

"You are free to do as you like. Are you going over to Crompton, or are you going to stay with me?"

She turned her frightened eyes from the manufacturer to Euston, and murmured:

"I'm going t' stay with you-all."

Under his hand which was on her shoulder Euston could feel the flesh grow cold through her cotton dress.

Grismore, tired of the scene, and anxious to spare his wife any further opportunity for study of the lower classes, spoke again to his hands:

"Is there anyone here who has a claim on this girl?"

And Cally Griscom stirred.

"Yes, suh; I'm 'quainted with her folks."

"Well, then," gestured Grismore, "take her along with you, and let us get these folks moving."

But Griscom stood immovable. He grinned.

"I cayn't take no gyrl from her '*sport*' if she-all don't want t' go!"

In the interval the man at Lily Bud's side had managed to say a great deal to her. They had no intention of being parted, that was clear to be seen.

Grismore relinquished the adjustment with disgust.

"Come, start these people along, Radnor. I will have this man arrested and locked up. You're no companion for an innocent young girl."

And the girl, about to burst into tears at this threat, fluttered out:

"He suttinly is goin' to marry me!"

The manufacturer shrugged his shoulders and said with an ugly look:

"If it is as bad as that, you'd better take him at his word. There are no laws to prevent you marrying a drunkard, but you are a fool!"

He drew on his gloves and settled his hat. His annoyance at the girl's obstinacy and the man's insolence served him to vent his spleen on Radnor. He moved toward his buggy.

"Look here, Radnor: I find this man who has been engaged by my overseer to work in my mills incapacitated at your tavern. Now, it's to your advantage to look after him."

Here the man who had been obliged to lean on Lily Bud for support felt his breast heave with fury. He withdrew from the girl, staggered up to Grismore, and said, close to the manufacturer's face:

"And you? Who made you a judge? Come! Have you ever known the curse of thirst, the love of drink, and satisfied it? Come!"

Grismore grew deathly white, all save the veins in his nose, red cords running down through the fleshy part.

"By . . . !" he doubled his fist—"if you were sober, I would knock you down!"

And he would have been obliged to do so in sheer self-defence if Radnor, coming forward, had not grasped Euston from the back by both arms. Euston's strength had already out-worn itself. Grismore stared a second furiously at the face near him. As if by mental photography the features were impressed on his mind—a clear-cut, well-bred face, dark eyes, and a slender,

black-pointed beard. There was a familiar look in those eyes. Who was this man? Where had they seen each other?

Without another word to him, Grismore turned on his heel, put his foot on the buggy step, and got in. But his wife laid her hand on his arm.

"Jacob, the man is ill. You can't order a man like that to be locked up in gaol. Tell Radnor to send him to the hospital."

Her voice was so tense, the clasp on his arm so strong, that, angry as he was, he felt that to deny her would be a grave mistake, something he could not afford to do. He therefore turned about abruptly to Radnor, and said:

"Mrs. Grismore has a kind word to say for this wretched creature. Give him a room in your hotel; put him to bed." He turned to Euston magnificently. "I'll forget your insolence; you don't know what you are doing. You'd better sleep your drink off before you think of marriage. Keep the girl with your wife, Radnor. If she wants to marry him when he's sober, why, it's her own affair."

Here Mrs. Grismore leaned forward as though she would have spoken to them, then evidently thought better of it, and turned her head away. But her look of pitiful sympathy, the emotion in her face, was not lost. Euston quivered under it; it touched and shamed him. Thus had he fallen, become a thing to wring a woman's heart to see. But he remembered her to the dim edge of his days.

Radnor still held him by the arms, but might without danger have let him go. Passion had died in him; he stood wavering, his eyes fastened on the ground. When the buggy had rolled out of sight the hotel-keeper gave him a push.

"Such scum as you are ought to be kept off the face of the earth. I'm damned sorry for the girl, that's all I say. To-morrow you clear off my premises, do you hear? If it was not for the woman, I'd kick you up

into the town. You can sleep here to-night, for her sake."

Euston straightened himself and raised to the inn-keeper a face from which hate had died. He said with a certain grace:

"I won't trouble you for a room. I'm going up to town to find a minister. I promise to keep off your premises. You'll get into trouble with that brute if I don't."

"Well, get along with you," Radnor said more decently. "Try to keep away from a bar for twenty-four hours."

Euston put his arm through the woman's, and she led him away, weeping and wiping her tears with the other hand.

The band of workers had safely been started. As they crossed the hotel yard into the road and began slowly to take their direction millwards, they turned to look back over their shoulders at the drama before their eyes. They could do nothing, they could say nothing; they were sheep driven to something very like a slaughter-house, and they lifted their eyes toward it, absorbed now in the tragedies of their own lives.

Mr. Grismore's buggy slowly followed. The master intended to keep pace with his slaves on their march. Mrs. Grismore was silent. After they left the hotel yard her husband, still excited from his intercourse with this strange man, sat smoking, his face flushed. Never had he shown to more unfortunate advantage in his wife's eyes. His attitude when brought face to face with a crisis demanding delicacy and good breeding caused her bitter shame. In this instance he had shown himself inhuman. In speechless misery she reflected that she could say nothing to affect quality of heart such as she had seen him display.

Chapter VII

ON the third day after the exodus of the primitive people of Henschley's and Daco from their forest home to the mills, Amanda overslept herself, and as soon as she was awakened she called, even from her room, before leaving it: "Gran'maw!" and got no response. The old woman was not yet astir.

The quietness of the house in the morning sunlight made her feel lonely, and to counteract her feeling she hummed aloud the strains of Cally Griscom's song:

" 'I'll foller her Norf,
I'll foller her Souf.' "

And calling, "Gran'maw, howdy!" pushed in the door to Mrs. Henschley's bedroom. Amanda entered a few steps, paused, and stood transfixed, staring at the bed.

The old woman's head, thrown back, raised the pointed chin boldly upward, and through her parted lips came the stertorous breath. Without the calico comforter the leather-like hands lay inertly, and in its lank line, almost formless, the old body extended, straight and still. The eyes, open, turned in their sockets toward the door at Amanda's entrance.

In the stricken creature, whose life had been one series of griefs, hardships, and exchange of burdens, consciousness remained, and it broke her heart to feel that she was unable to relieve the terror of the child who, with a cry of astonishment and fear, rushed toward her. Grandmaw made a gigantic effort, her lips stirred. "Sick!" and her gaze travelled down to her helpless, motionless limbs. They would never move in harness again.

" Sick! "

The poor creature forced the word through her rebellious lips. The child lifted one of the heavy hands suddenly grown so useless. She looked around the squalid room as if to beseech aid from its few familiar objects. She touched grandmaw's forehead. Under her palms the veins rose like whip-cords.

" What's the mattah, gran'maw, honey? "

But she knew even as she asked. Her grandmother was "*strucken*." That was it. Cally Griscom's mother had been like this, and lived ten years. Gran'maw Henchley was "*strucken*."

The singular inactivity come upon the faithful machine, Mrs. Henchley's silent acquiescence to the implacable fate, terrified the young girl. She peered with freezing blood into the face grown more and more expressionless.

" Gran'maw! " she cried aloud again. " Look hyar; it's 'Manda. Ih stayed here with you-all! They oughtn't tew of left us like this, gran'maw. . . . "

Across the edges of the thin lips no sound should ever pass again. No more words to reassure and solace, no more proverbs to point like sign-posts the wise ways of life to the feet of her grandchildren. The lids of her eyes flickered for response, and Amanda had no other.

She ran out of the room to the kitchen, got some whisky, and endeavoured to force a spoonful between the setting teeth. The liquor gurgled in the throat, returned, and slipped droolingly at the mouth's corners. Amanda was crying bitterly, wiping her tears on her dress sleeve, bending down to the old woman, kissing her cheeks, and beseeching her to reply.

For a moment the eyes grew singularly clear, as though a veil lifted. With faithful persistence they sought the face of the girl, whose fascinated look fastened on the face and fluttering eyelids. Now and then something like a sigh passed her grandmother's lips.

There was no possibility of seeking aid. Before twelve miles could be traversed death would come.

Thus the day passed, the brilliant, soundless autumn day. The sunlight poured floods of crimson brightness through the shanty windows, glory of days forgotten, of days past, and days to come in its tide. On bare, plasterless walls, pure, celestial, the light fell, and lay in trembling circles on the calico of the faded quilt. It touched the hands, attenuating from life to death; touched the outline of the beautiful old backwoods woman and the leaning form of the young girl. Amanda's hair was the only thing in the sun's likeness, and on that bowed head its luminance lingered and the light found home. She arose at noon, aching in every limb, her face grief-stricken. She got herself a piece of bread, and ate it standing in the middle of the kitchen floor, her breast heaving with its burden. When she returned to her post the withered hand lay where she let it fall. She clasped it in her warm, devoted ones, and knelt again, as she had been, with it pressed against her breast.

As the day faded, so paled and slipped away the life in old Mrs. Henschley.

Through sheer grief and exhaustion Amanda slept an hour, and was aroused to consciousness by the sensation of something very cold against her cheek. The hand upon which her face rested was ice, but the death-struggle, the search for breath, the last horror, had been spared her young eyes.

She sprang from her knees with a cry, stared at the mask of humanity, from whose contour every vestige of life had fled, and then, the horror of the truth coming upon her, her loneliness and helplessness accentuating her dread, she turned and rushed from the room, out of the shanty into the evening light.

Chapter VIII

THE Southern Limited skimming through Daco never thought of slowing at the humble little station, but rushed with a shrill whistle and scream past half a dozen shanties thrown helter-skelter midway between forest and railroad track.

The miserable shiftlessness of the Southern settlement possessed Daco to the fullest; there was never "anything doing" here. To eat corn bread, molasses, and ham, to hunt and smoke, to straggle down to the station and watch the scornful trains tear by, was the settlers' manner of passing their existences.

The opening of Grismore's mills at Rexington some two hundred miles away had made a clearing in the village. Whole families decamped at the "rousing up" of the smooth-tongued overseers, who portrayed Rexington in glowing terms, and mill labour as the acme of dignified and deserving toil. In the hope of procuring education for their children, and luxury for themselves, a large part of Daco had gone down to the mills.

Dex Falloner, who boasted the title of carpenter in Daco, got up this morning very early. There was a bit of repairing, a couple of shingles to be put on the station roof. It was a long time before "a couple" of anything had been needed in his line of trade, and the fact that he was actually to do a bit of work and be paid for it stimulated him to rise with the dawn. With a miserable little sack of tools over his back, and his saw, he started out betimes into the fresh morning. Across the neighbours' yards he made for the Daco road, humming the air of his last musical creation, "I'll sing to ma honey chile."

His voice came forth so mellow and sweet that he actually enjoyed it himself.

Before turning towards the station, as he stopped for a moment to look down the road running from Daco to the Henschley's, he saw, coming toward him, the slight figure of a woman walking slowly and pausing between her steps. As the figure slowly grew near it grew more and more familiar.

"Ma soul, why it's 'Manda Henschley!"

White as death, her pinched little face lifted above the collar of her cotton dress, her eyes wild and unnatural, her hair a mass of brilliant disorder, she wavered in the road as though a step more and she would fall. Falloner ran up to her.

"What, for God sake, is you-all doing here? Speak tew Dex!"

The little girl tried in vain to obey him, and the lips that moved were so thin and drawn that the young man was frightened, and put his arm around her. His touch and kind voice broke the spell long hours of silence and death had cast over the poor child. She clung to him with a frantic little clutch.

"Gran'maw! gran'maw! gran'maw!"

"What's the matter of her, honey? Tell Dex."

He spoke as though she were an infant to be soothed.

"Dayde—she's dayde; Ih dunno how."

The commotion in her breast nearly broke her heart, and with no further words Falloner lifted her bodily in his arms. She put her arms around his neck, and her head on his shoulder, and in this way he carried her into his mother's shanty.

One afternoon many weeks later Amanda sat on a soap-box in front of the Falloners' house. Her calico wrapper was stiffly starched and clean, her hair was brushed and shining. If the soap and water could have soaked out the copper of it, it would have done so. It had darkened it as it was, and her face was thus thrown into a sharp white contrast. There was but one

morsel of crape in the town of Daco; the minister had lent it, and it now decorated Amanda's neck in a sort of scarf. Whatsoever roundness her slender sixteen years possessed she had lost. She had been terribly ill at the Falloners', and the sad services for her grandmother were accomplished without her knowledge.

Dex Falloner and one of the Griscom twins stood before the little invalid; the other twin had gone to the mills.

"George had a postcard from his brother," said Dexter. "Lily Bud's done got a job spoolin', he says."

"What else?"

"Nothin', Ih reckon."

Falloner did not deem it important to tell the rest of the news the card brought. The girl turned her thin hands over and over, and inspected them. They were extremely well formed, fine-boned, and slender-fingered. This she did not know, but they looked very white to her, and frail.

"You-all's got a lady's hand," said Falloner.

She smiled and displayed her soft, pink palm, and pointed to a star on the flesh of her first finger.

"Gra'maw said Ih had a lucky mark on ma paum. She always 'lowed et was a love merrege."

Falloner and Griscom inspected it with interest, their heads bent over the girl's hands. Falloner laughed with embarrassment, and to his sentimental mind the star rose on his own horizon. Amanda was very pretty in her pallor and frailness. The weather-stain of her country life had gone. The freckles on her nose had faded. Her mouth had lost its sauciness, and her grief and loneliness added a pathos to its expression not without charm.

Falloner gave his friend a kick in the shins by way of gentle hint, and the boy got up and went indoors and left the two alone. The young hunter said to Amanda:

"You-all is goin' to have some powerful nice byrds for your tea."

"Ih ain't rightly got no appetite," said the child.

"Oh, you'll get an appetite fast enough with eatin', and git well again, tew."

Mrs. Falloner, preparing supper, stirred about just inside the door, and the smell of the cooking came to them where they sat.

Falloner wanted to take the hand whose palm on the first finger-mount displayed a "love merrege." He had a feeling that if he could possess himself of this hand before anyone else did it would be well for him. He said gently:

"You-all kin never go back to Henchley's, Amanda."

She shook her head vehemently.

"Ih got to tell tew you that they ain't suttinly so much as a dollar left for you since they paid the services."

She made no sign of surprise; she stared in front of her at the children playing in the heap of rubbish by the corner in the sand. Falloner wondered if the pretty smile he knew so well would ever come back to her mouth.

"So's Ih don't mind askin' you now, Amanda, to merry me. I'm powerful fond of you-all."

This remark demanded an answer from the girl. The love-mark on her hand had taken her thoughts back to the memory of the night before Euston's departure. Falloner's voice broke rudely on her meditations. She drew a little away, and said:

"No, no, Ih suttinly do't want tew!"

"Don't you like me any, Amanda?"

"Not that a-way."

The colour that filled her pale cheeks alarmed him. He said quietly:

"Ih prob'ly kin wait a spell; we won't talk about et any more."

Amanda said:

"I'm goin' to the mills to find Lily Bud."

"You ain't strong 'nough to do no work, 'Manda," Falloner objected.

"Ih'll get strong soon," she nodded, glad of the change of conversation, "and Ih want to find ma sister."

If Amanda went down to the mills he would take her, and work near her, and wait his time.

Mrs. Falloner called from the threshold shrilly:

"Say, are you-all goin' to keep that sick child out twell she gets her death? Come in hyar, Dex Falloner, and carry 'Manda in with you."

Book II
The Captives

Chapter I

Six weeks later Euston, on a bed in the McCullough gaol, was awakened by a shaft of sunlight that, entering the humid darkness of the cell, fell lightly across his closed eyelids. Through a window set high in the prison wall the translucent way of the sun was divinely cut.

Straight as if shot from a bow invisible—and who can say it was not?—it pierced the gloomy atmosphere, and fell like a mantle upon the cot whereon lay six feet of miserable humanity. It was morning. His routine called him to rise and dress, but he was not in a hurry to obey. His long arms, stretched out before him, his hands inert on the blue blanket, he watched the shaft of light, and as though it were a wand, it smote open the recesses of his thoughts.

In the prison-room next him several negroes were quarrelling. The night before the gaol had been threatened by a roaring mob whose fingers itched to inflict upon these barbarians swift and peremptory justice.

Euston himself, calloused and indifferent to fate, caring little whether the gaol were broken open like an ant-hill from which these miserable creatures, freed, should exude forth, or whether it remained until Time's hand should irredeemably crumble it, had listened to the wretches as they moaned forth their petitions for mercy. He listened to them now, as, secure in the protection of their four walls, they cursed and swore in the serene light of morning.

It was the day of his trial. To-day should see him

either freed, or condemned to whatever justice South Carolina might see fit to extend to a man who had struck another in his indignant claim for the body of his wife. Euston thought not at all of the outcome. His mind, on the contrary, went to the past as though this seclusion were a hive, into which at appointed hours the bees came swarming home. So his hours swarmed around him.

Chapter II

HE had been born on a farm in ——— County, an only child of a mother he adored. She had worked—that amount which justifies a true woman's right to existence. She made good things to eat, kept her little house swept and garnished. Each room had its own peculiar, delicious smell, and Henry Euston thought that his mother's clothes were the prettiest a woman could wear—calicoes freshly starched for summertime, dark woollens, the best kind of dress, for the winter. These were what Mrs. Euston really wore, but they represented to the boy the loveliest of qualities and the rarest of stuffs. The woman must have been possessed of some coquetry also, because if Euston had been a painter he would invariably have put some decoration at her throat, a flower in her dress, or possibly that unusual ornament to a woman on a Western farm—earrings in the small ears. He would have turned her head a little to one side, accentuating the contour of her chin. Certain it is he would have given her skin without wrinkles, a small mouth and an expression of face indicative of feeling and tenderness rather than intellectual development—the face a boy would adore in his mother, not only because he was her son, but because of a man's appreciation for the type all men admire.

Mrs. Euston kept a hired girl and a hired man, and although they both ate at the table with Mrs. Euston and her son, Henry was conscious of a wide difference between them and himself. His mother taught him to read, the rudiments of arithmetic, and later there was a small stock of good books to be enjoyed. He was not made to work, and never did anything but those things which he wanted to do, until he was a big boy, and then

his mother broke to him the fact that he was to go to school.

This was the first obstacle to Henry's happiness, and he threw himself with tears against the decision. On the day his mother told him this news she held an open letter, and from it a cheque for money rustled to the ground. Henry picked it up and gave it into her hand, not without remarking a name, never very clear to him, and the bank engraving surrounded by a gray sea of pictures. The hired girl, Ann, had taken out the piled-up dishes to wash them in the sink-room. Henry heard the splashing of the dish-water and sound of the soap clicking against the plates, and the clatter of forks and knives. He could also hear Ann, who had a lovely voice, and who often sang him to sleep, singing "Jamie's on the Dark Blue Sea."

His mother stood by the breakfast-table looking down at him with tenderness, pride, and pain in her face. The coffee-pot was at her hand, a plate of hot biscuits near it, and out of the open window the brisk autumn air blew the ends of the little red calico curtains.

"You are to go to school, Henry, in Boston."

To his weeping refusal to leave her Mrs. Euston replied:

"It ain't what I want, nor what you want; it is what *he* wants."

When Henry had said, "Who is *he*?" she had replied:

"Your father"; and that was the first time this factor of his life had been mentioned.

He exclaimed with childish frankness:

"I didn't know as I had one."

Through her tears—for she had been crying—Mrs. Euston laughed a little.

"Well, of course you've got a father! Every little boy's got a father, and he wants you should go to school."

"What is that money for?"

And she answered quickly:

"For your schooling, and for nothing else."

In short, he went to school, and the hired man drove him to the railroad station. His trunk contained everything a mother could think of to awaken bursts of affection in the heart of a lonely little boy. He went to school; his vacations were spent at home on the farm, where everything, as it is sure to do when seen from the height we attain year by year, grew smaller and less important; more general, less individual; only the figure of his mother remained unchanged. And yet it was she alone who altered! She became melancholy, thin, and pale, revealing a more touching beauty as the ravages of loneliness and hidden sorrow made marks upon her that her boy was too young to observe.

Henry, who had never learned to work with his hands, worked as well with his mind as he knew. He was more than an average scholar, and when at length another letter came, with another display of bank engraving on the cheque, and he was prepared for college, at seventeen he found himself more advanced than the average man of his age. By nature extremely indolent, he accepted everything without question. But in his junior year he was determined to ask his mother much, when he should go back to the farm for his holidays. Before those holidays fell, he was summoned home by telegram, and hurried with sinking heart to find his mother very ill in bed in the little room he had always known and loved as "mother's room." She had sent for him as late as she had dared; it was already near to being too late. He stood by her side in a passion of grief, one of those beloved hands between his own. It was autumn. Through the window, out into the bright autumn air, the ends of the calico curtains were blowing. Across his mother had been outspread one of the marvellous quilts he remembered her hands to have been so constantly busy piecing into stars, circles, and squares.

"There isn't anything to say to you, Henry, excepting don't ever be too hard on a woman."

The message was so extraordinary that, his breaking

heart in his throat, he bent and listened closely. His mother managed to make him understand thus far.

"Your father—he *is* your father, Henry—*has never been my husband*. I wasn't meant to be like that; it has broken my heart."

Euston, in the selfishness of youth, felt for an instant the personal stab, and was sensible of his own pain above all, although he was witnessing a dying struggle.

"*Mother*, do you mean to tell me I have no name?"

Greater grief could not settle over the features of the woman before him than had already possessed them.

"I mean to say that he has promised to come every year to marry me; he has never come."

Although Euston, as gently as he could, besought for the name of the man, he could gain no information. The thoughts of his mother had gone to other things. Her mind wandered, and, fortunately for her, wandered to happier days. The young man sitting on the bed by her side never left her throughout the afternoon and late into the evening. There was an iron in his soul, as there was infinite grief in his heart. At the moment even the worship for his mother was clouded for him by his strange personal shock. He listened to her wanderings; and as one listens to intangible things in dreams, and with the consciousness of another identity strives to grasp the meaning of the visions of sleep, so he strove to gain some revelations from her lips. There was none. Once she spoke of Virginia, once she spoke of Fredericksburg, and that was all; and at sunset she closed her eyes, drew a long breath, like a sigh, which was her way of delivering up her spirit. She did this silently, and with no tirade against the world of wrong, with no blaming of the man who had made her a victim, and her son nameless.

His position regarding the world was different. His attitude was in strong contrast to her feminine acquiescence.

Chapter III

HE found himself almost penniless, he felt himself dishonoured; and although engulfed by bitterness, he was far from fathoming the depths of his own misery. During the melancholy tranquillity of the days succeeding the funeral he wandered hither and thither over the farm, his figure bowed, his carriage the very expression of dejection. Indeed, the heart within him was corroding under the devouring quality of a grief which exists supremely when man is conscious of his own impotence against fate. It was eating its eternal pattern into Euston's soul.

He had a hundred dollars to his name. In his own humiliated eyes he had no name! He went back to Boston feeling that it would have been his mother's wish, and made up his mind to work his way through college. The experiment was a failure. He had never been ambitious, and whatever might have grown to stand in ambition's stead was nipped in the bud by the morbid, recurring fact of his birth. The desire to discover the personality of his father became an obsession with him. He believed that the stopping of the cheques of this man at the last period of his mother's life had hastened her death. At all events, he felt sure, now that he was older and more enlightened, that a sacred grief had been at his mother's heart for years, and could not permit himself to dwell upon it; it brought her touchingly and vividly before the eyes of the son who worshipped her. Her last words to him—"Never be hard on a woman, Henry,"—became to him simply the explanation of her own fate. He determined to seek out the man who marred her life, and who dared to fling

him a nameless and unprotected existence, and to heavily charge him with responsibilities.

It is not strange that his misery ill prepared him for study. At the very thought of his father his morals folded their wings. The aerial creature, his spirit, fell to nothing more than a crawling thing—a veritable expression of the beast, kin with the animalism which had called forth his nameless existence.

He drank at first because he wanted to drown his thoughts. It did not take him long to discover that he had more than a taste for it, and he decided it was in his case an inheritance, and therefore useless to battle against it. Little by little he grew to consider himself a reproduction of his father's indulgences, and longed to present himself, an accusing entity, to his parent.

He was obliged to work very hard in order to pay his tuition, and he waited at a club restaurant and studied at nights. Intelligent and of unusual refinement, Euston could have only fraternized with men from whom, by his own knowledge of his birth, he felt himself to be ostracized. He rejected all expressions of friendship from class men whose social position was better than his. He was good-looking, of an attractive personality, and when perfectly sober possessed of great charm. But his morose, ungenial qualities repelled anyone who sought to force an intimacy upon him. One young man in particular, son of a New York millionaire, vainly tried to chum with Euston. After repeated rebuffs the young fellow withdrew chagrined. That a chap who worked his way through college, whose habits were already looked upon askance, should have the aplomb to refuse his society! Indeed, he damned Euston with the decision that he was devilish queer, and going to the dogs as fast as a man can. After this he was left alone.

His best hours were spent in the streets of Boston after dark, whither he wandered solitary and meditative during the winter nights of his last year. He felt himself greatly drawn to the nameless wanderers whom he

passed in his penetrations into the poorer parts of the city; he would fain at times have affiliated with the specimens of humanity who brushed him by in their rags and squalor. One bitter night in February he was going back to Cambridge, and stopped to take the car at — street. He was made to pause by a sound of weeping—it was a woman's voice. He turned to see her crouch close to the railing of a dilapidated house. He went up to her. She was in the last stages of grief, illness, and despair. Before her degradation and her outcries against Fate and mankind he stood silent, and when she cried, "I am going to kill myself and the child. What's the good of the world for either of us?" Euston made her no response; but in that second he felt that he had given consent to murder and suicide. He put his hand on the woman's arm.

"I will look after you, and stand by you."

And he did. He took the woman himself that night in a cab to Cambridge, where he placed her under the care of a washerwoman in whose good sense and kindness he believed he could repose. From his slender purse he paid all her expenses, and expenses of her illness. After her child was born something of his deed was discovered—sufficient for rumour to make the most of. It grew to be an ugly report.

Henry Euston, when summoned before the faculty, was in no fit mental state to meet the charges against his morals. He had been drinking. He met the accusations in dogged and indifferent silence. He was expelled from Cambridge. When he came thoroughly to himself and realized what had happened, he crossed his arms against Fate.

He sold his scanty belongings, and gave every penny of the proceeds to the woman and her child, but he was conscious of a responsibility assumed which he could by no means meet with these few dollars. This responsibility overcame even his bitterness at the blow Fate had dealt him. Euston decided that he who is humbled to the earth has no reason to fear a fall! And he took dis-

inclination firmly between his teeth—in one nut—and cracked it!

He went to the rooms of the young fellow who had endeavoured to win his friendship a few months ago. The student was having a supper for some of his cronies, and came out in response to Euston, who waited for him in the smoking-room. He stayed away from his guests so long that, after repeated yells and calls for his return, one of his friends came to fetch him. The host stood alone, smoking a cigarette, and although he went back arm in arm with the emissary, he was absent-minded throughout the rest of the evening. He brusquely refused to discuss Euston and his bad character, and, indeed, his friends said of him in the Chinese expression that "*his face was changed.*"

He left Boston in disgrace, he was in the eyes of all men (but one) a scoundrel and a drunkard, he only had the clothes he wore on his back and five dollars in his pocket.

This was Henry Euston's début on the scene of life.

Chapter IV

ALL of this he reviewed as he lay in his prison cell. Up to this point he permitted the bees to fetch him their burdens as they liked; but he refused to receive the later memories that came flooding with their overwhelming store. Subsequent years of struggle and temptation, a hand-to-hand struggle with existence, as, by virtue of something in him stronger than the temptation to take his own life, he embraced one by one different opportunities. Now, long debarred the solace and excitement of drink, he found himself regarding his past debauches with disgust. His body bore the record acutely of all he had undergone; his thin limbs, his emaciated hands, his face, displayed history he had no desire to read. Euston considered himself crushed—a flesh-and-blood sacrifice to fate. Of himself, as a responsible being, he did not think, and he pardoned not at all his unknown parent, whom he continually accused of his inclinations and his failures.

The episode of his advent into the South and his marriage was half to him a nightmare and half a reality.

Thus he lay musing until a clanging clock without and the clash of the bells from the church tower warned him of the advancing day.

Fastened into the cement in the side of the cell was a six-inch bit of looking-glass. He had considered his face in this more than once during his confinement. The vision reflected was that of a man past thirty years of age. But Euston was not so old by many years. The oval of the face, the sensitive nostrils, the moulding of the nose, chin, and mouth, indicated a refinement which,

despite the blurr and curtain that indulgence and sin had let darkly fall from brow to chin, made itself still undeniably perceived. His eyes were dull and heavy, his brow was lined deeply, and his lips, long, scarlet, and parched, were now, after weeks of confinement, pale; the colour of his face was pasty-white, and startled him with its pallor through the furze of his black beard, long uncared for. The thing that struck him particularly as he looked at himself in the glass was the powdering of gray hair about his temples. If death and disease had power to affright him, his body would have given him cause for alarm. As he stood thus for a moment, nude to the waist, his figure was like ivory, which extreme grief and sin had worn until the fine material of the texture was thinned to its most transparent quality. When he was dressed, he turned to the table whereon stood the breakfast which the gaoler had brought him an hour before—a cup of sloppy, unpleasant-looking coffee and a piece of bread. He had scarcely finished when the door of his cell was pushed open. With the light that streamed in from the corridor, a little figure entered, preceding the gaoler.

“Hyar’s a lady to see you; try to treat her like a gentleman.”

With this singular recommendation, the functionary withdrew, and the girl he had ushered in came forward.

“Whar’s my sister? Whar’s Lily Bud?”

Euston blinked at her. He had not seen many objects of interest during these past three weeks. His cell was dark. He stared at Amanda, for it was she.

“Where did you come from?”

She did not reply; she was trembling with the excess of her feelings; her breast was heaving; her hands were clasped to her.

“Why did you come here?” exclaimed Euston. “Sit down on my cot beside me. You look as if you had been sick.”

The girl shook her head, refusing his invitation and his interest as well.

"Whar's my sister?"

He frowned.

"I don't know."

"You-all carried her down from gran'maw's, an' gran'maw sayde: 'Mr. Euston, you suttinly look after Lily Bud.'" She paused. Euston did not seem moved by the appeal. "Gran'maw's dayde." She nodded her fine little head at him, accusing him of being false to his vow. Her face was thin as a lily, and very pale. Her gray eyes, deepened by grief, and from which sorrow had smitten all merriment, made a shadow against her face. Her hair, cut short, lay warm and heavy around her brow. She had no hat, and over her calico dress was pinned a little gray shawl; it covered her shoulders, and added to the meek appearance of her extreme youth. She repeated, "Gran'maw's dayde."

"I am sorry—very sorry," said the man. "What was the matter?"

"Ih do'no," said the child, "and never mind, anyway. Ih want you to give me back ma sister."

Euston put his hand on her shoulder, and, without much resistance from her, forced her to sit on his cot; he sat down beside her.

"You are played out. You are not the same girl I left in the hills. I don't know where your sister is, and I wish to God I could give her back to you just as I took her from Mrs. Henchley's."

"What's happened to her?"

He said: "Well, let me tell you how it was. But first answer me, who brought you to the gaol?"

"Is Lily Bud dayde?"

"No, indeed."

"Porely?"

"No; she was well enough when I saw her last."

These details satisfied for the moment the anxious sister.

"Ih come down with Falloner. He was going to find Cally Griscom. You-all remembers him?" (Euston had good reason to remember him!) "We struck Radnor's

tavern no more 'n an hour ago, and when Fallonier was seekin' out Cally, Ih asts fer Lily Bud. They-all didn't know her name hyarabout; then Ih ast fer you, and the gentleman reckoned you wuz in gaol, so Ih ast where et was. He laughed at me so's he could skeercely pint the way, but Ih came hyar, and ast if Mr. Henry Euston was hyar; they said 'Yes,' and Ih told them Ih was from where *he* come from. . . ."

"Is that all they told you at Radnor's?"

Amanda nodded.

"Yes, you-all kin tell me the rest."

"I will," said Euston. "When I married your sister——" Amanda's hands went to her heart; she gave a start, and said "Oh!" in a soft, birdlike way, something between a call and an appeal. Euston saw it, and misinterpreted her emotion. He said apologetically: "I know you don't think I was fit to marry her. I should not have done so, but I couldn't help it. We were alone there, and she needed someone; and if I hadn't done what I did, something worse would have happened; and we had to find work immediately. The mill-owner of Crompton turned me off, but I got a job for us both in the Ralings Mills, and they advanced us a week's pay." Euston frowned as he talked. "The men were crazy about Lily Bud; they couldn't leave her alone. I was trying to keep sober those days, so that I could get along with my work, but one night I came out on the porch of our boarding-house, and Lily Bud was holding a man's hand; he was a weaver in my room. I didn't say anything, but just turned around and went in. Pretty soon she came in to me, crying, and said she hadn't wanted him to make love to her, and I forgave her."

Here Amanda interrupted him.

"She was coaxin' allers—she suttinly was, tew."

Euston ignored this.

"I told the fellow the next day that if he did not get out of our boarding-house by night he would go out too fast for his own pleasure. Well, he went!" Euston

began to walk up and down the room. "That was the first. . . ." Then he appeared to forget the little girl on his bed and her white, pathetic face as she listened, and he broke forth into fury. "That was the first, but there were many others! I couldn't trust the girl out of my sight. . . . I fought two men at the boarding-house . . . then the landlady put us out, and we had to go into a hotel. Here they didn't regard dispensary law, and I made a beast of myself over and over again. One night I was coming out of the back of the hotel where I had been drinking, and I saw my wife with Griscom. He had his arms around her, and it was unlucky for him that I had my gun on me! When he saw me he dropped the girl, and I saw him reach for his pistol. I got mine out first, and they say I nearly killed him. He'll get well, thank God! I don't want his blood on my soul; I have about as much as I can carry without that. I'm not at all afraid they'll do anything to me; they can't."

"Ih'm right glad you didn't kill him!" Amanda was breathless.

Euston stopped, and faced her.

"Well, what about *me*?" His voice was irritated, like a child's asking in vain for sympathy. "Aren't you sorry for *me*?"

Her hands were folded in her lap, and Euston had never seen anything like the face raised to him; it made him think of certain pictures of the Virgin and Saints.

"Ih *am* right sorry," she said gently. "You hadn't ought tew of merried her; if you'd of ast *me*, Ih could of told you. She was always that a-way."

Euston sat down on the bed beside Amanda.

"Your grandmother was a good woman; it's not her fault if one of you has gone wrong. Tell me about her—if it doesn't make you feel too bad."

"It makes me sayde," the little thing said slowly—"powerful sayde. . . . Ih ain't ne-vah goin' to git over it! . . . Sometimes Ih hyar her trampin' round in the night. . . . Sometimes Ih hyar her callin'. Las' night

she called . . . 'Lily Bud!'—plain as plain! You-all ain't goin' back on her?" she asked timidly.

Euston exclaimed: "I don't ever want to see her again, to tell you the truth."

"Yo' suttinly *must*," the child said firmly. "Why, Ih come all the way from Daco tew fin' her. Thayre was a washout to the railroad, so Dex Falloner an' me got an ole boat jest below Daco, and we come down the river, 'cause Ih was tew weak f'om the fever tew walk. We travelled that a-way all night. . . . Sometimes the wind blowed the boat into the reeds . . . but Dex, he waded out, and drug her into the stream."

Euston regarded her with many strange things in his mind.

"You say you were alone two nights with Falloner?"

Amanda nodded Yes with perfect simplicity. "And he's pow'ful fond of me, tew! When he got tyr'd polin' t'yards mornin' Ih let him lie down in the boat and put his hayde in my lap."

"Are you going to marry him?"

"Ih suttinly *ain't*!"—sharply. "Ih don't car' anythin' 'bout him."

"I guess you had better."

The child said crossly: "You-all has suttinly got merrege on yo' brain! Ih ain't ast you tew gimme no advice! You mus' stan' by ma sister," she continued, with something like her old determination.

"What do you want me to do?"

He looked hopelessly down between his hands on the floor of the gaol.

"Why, I want you-all should take her back again."

"She doesn't want to come back to me."

"She will," encouraged the child, "fast 'nough, you'll see. It's her ways."

Euston said restlessly: "I'm shut up here; I don't know when they will let me out."

"Well," said Amanda, "Ih kin git a lift over tew the mills where Dex Falloner works, and Ih'll make him dew somethin' or other 'bout you."

She didn't look more than fifteen years of age as she stood before him, small and thin. He put out his own slender hand, and laid it on the shoulder of the gray shawl.

"You're worth your weight in gold."

She stirred from under his touch.

"Ih reckon Ih'll be quite a fortune to the one what gits me," she said, with her sweet, short laugh.

He was glad to hear it, and looked at her affectionately.

"No one's good enough to get you! Have you any money, Amanda?"

She shook her head.

He thrust his hands into his trouser-pockets, uselessly—he knew how empty they were—then he shrugged his shoulders, and smiled at her; but the smile was sadder than tears. He shook his head without speaking. Amanda understood.

"Don't you-all fret; Ih'll git hold of Dex—we'll fix up somethin'."

At the click, click of the gaoler's key both started.

"Come, young lady."

She put out her hand, and Euston clung to it. There awoke within him a great gratitude to her, and a dawning appreciation of what she was; but as he clung to her hands it was not so much gratitude for her help of him as a desire to protect this frail, kind little creature.

"If they don't get me out, you will come back?" he asked eagerly.

"Ih suttinly will."

"What's that?" he asked.

He put out his hand on her hair, and took from it a brown leaf.

"Ih reckon it felled from a tree as Ih come along in the boat. Like as not thayre's burrs in it, tèv."

"Come," said the gaoler, "don't stay spooning any longer."

Amanda had on her grandmother's slippers; they hung on her feet as she pattered out of the cell into the

corridors. She cast a terrified glance from side to side at the grated doors that they passed. The cries and calls after her frightened her. A black face peered at her through the grating. She slunk close to the gaoler. Despite her terror, tears came to her eyes for the man she had left and for herself; she wiped them on the end of her shawl.

"Come along," said the man not unkindly. "You've no call to be afraid of those fellows. The only difference between them and some of the rest outside is that these are caged up safe and the others *ain't*."

Chapter V.

IN what is known as a six-roomed shanty, in this case part and parcel of Jacob Grismore's mill property, one evening in May, 189-, a group of mill-hands sat before their evening meal. The unplastered room, foul with odours of grease frying, bad fish, and the unmistakable odour of warm and unwashed human bodies, offered by way of dining-table a long pine board running the length of the room, and supported by saw-horses. Similar boards alongside, likewise so resting on horse blocks, were the dining-chairs. Tin plates bore the repast, and one presented fish-skin, bones, head and tail all cooked and served together with naïve indiscrimination; another was stacked high with cold hominy; one bowl contained fat drippings. There was a pitcher of molasses and one of coffee.

"Gerkins' Bo'din' Haouse" fed its guests lavishly, and before the banquet some ten hungry creatures had seated themselves to supply the waste made by their long labours. There were only two women: one a corpulent, blowsy creature, whose bodice, too small for her, was frankly unfastened at the breast several buttons down from the neck. She plied her knife and fork both at once, piling into her mouth, as fast as she could, hominy and bread. She was a weaver. Five years at the loom had been unavailing to reduce her abundant vitality or to thin her circumference. Her companion indifferently sat before her plate, on which was a bit of bread and some molasses, just as the "bo'din'-haouse keeper" had placed them. Gerkins, a plate of ham in his hand, said to her:

"You-all don't eat more 'n a fly. You-all shorely will have to learn yo' cayn't work on a empty stummick."

And Cynthia Jones—"Cinny," as she was known throughout the town—followed:

"*She* cayn't work, anyhow! Haow many times did you-all knock off, Mis' Euston?"

The younger woman, for whom this was intended as compliment rather than slur, turned her face to the speaker. Lily Bud's fresh colour had gone; her eyes were bloodshot all round the blue; her mouth was still pursed up, but its resemblance to a rose was now pathetic. The flower's form remained, the colour all bleached away.

"Ih knocked off three times, 'n ef it hadn't a bin fer the boss I'd be dayde, Ih reckon."

At this, one of the men opposite her, a giant fellow with low, evil brow and heavy, thick lips, sniggered comprehendingly. The hands using the knife and fork were like bits of leather—tanned, seamed, filthy. Around his nails rose the harsh corrugated flesh. Grease and sweat had run together all day down his face.

"You-all better hitch tew that thayre boss," he said. He-all will look out for yo'."

Without reply the pretty girl rubbed her piece of bread around on her plate in the molasses. She ignored his advice and attention, and sat half sulking and half meditative, her eyes on her plate. The other men during her silence joked her in vulgar, harmless innuendo, until Gerkins, entering with fresh coffee for them, said:

"Whar's Mr. Griscom?"

Then she answered:

"He's to the hospital."

"You-all ain't bin . . . ?"

No, and she had not wanted to go. From the moment her husband had reduced her lover to a helpless condition before her very eyes she had ceased to regard with pity or affection the man whose life her light behaviour had imperilled. Her volatile interest went at once to Euston, whose vengeance had proved quicker than Cally's defence. Her husband, at once seized upon by

Radnor—for the fight had been before the tavern—had been put in prison, and Lily Bud, penniless, saw no way to stop her work at the mills. Griscom in the hospital, Euston in gaol, and the eyes of all on her in curious insolence, she had left Rextington and the mill, and found work at Crompton. Here she repulsed the attentions of every man at Gerkins'. For once in her life their flatteries failed to excite her. None of them possessed either the good looks of Griscom or Euston's attraction. Moreover, the close approach to tragedy of her last escapade stunned her a little. She had been brutally recommended to "walk a chalk line if she wanted to keep out of gaol," and she was trying to do so as well as she knew. But this day the boss, who had never ceased to keep his eyes on her since she came to work in the spool-room, gave her unmistakably to understand that he was ready to look out for her from henceforth. Now, as she sat meditatively over her untasted food, her feet were trembling on the chalk line.

To form part of the little household of human beings, united by no tie save common brotherhood under the banner of toil, a new-comer was on the way, was at this moment coming up the wooden steps of the shanty. At a timid knock on the door the inmates of the kitchen looked up, and Gerkins went out to see who it might be, and returned, followed by a strange girl.

"Hyar's a caller for you-all, Mis' Euston."

And Mrs. Euston, starting in expectation of at the worst Griscom or Euston, beheld none other than Amanda. But, as though she had never expected anything but the appearance of her pale sister, who, bare-headed, wrapped in an old gray shawl, followed the boarding-house keeper like a phantom from a past, Lily Bud already was forgetting; she made her way from between pine dinner-table and seat and slowly advanced into the kitchen.

"Howdy, 'Manda. . . ."

This, no doubt, was the figure she herself had cut, Lily Bud reflected, when she first appeared in Rexting-

ton. The fact that upstairs hung a hat with roses and a real dress, both presented to her by poor Cally Griscom, suggested such a step between what Amanda represented of backwoods and Lily Bud's present that the older sister wanted to giggle at the vision in which all her childhood saw itself repeated. Therefore, a funny little smile welcomed Amanda, who in return had no smile to give. Glancing at the curious faces and the talk, she said:

"Ih suttinly hev got to speak to you-all, Lily Bud."

Congeniality had never existed between these two vividly distinct natures forced by birthright (arbitrary conjunctive, too often of enemies) to be companions. The vain, light mind of Lily Bud resented with positive hatred even Amanda's sense of humour.

"Folks always laughed when 'Manda sayde anythin', and *she* suttinly didn't see no fun in et."

Now, scornful of the queer figure before her, ashamed of her relationship, she said:

"Ef you want to tell me anythin', go on. You-all fetched youse tongue, Ih reckon."

At this the mill hands laughed aloud, enchanting Lily Bud, who could not recall ever having awakened responsive merriment by her sallies before. She threw her head back and nodded, as if to say, "Oh, I've developed in our separation. I can cope with your brilliance, miss."

But Amanda's wit in this case was conspicuously at halt. Her sober face did not change its expression as she said quietly:

"Ih come fer to fetch you-all a couple o' pieces o' news."

She drew near to the table. At the end of the board next to where Cinny Jones sprawled was a vacant seat. Amanda calmly sat herself down without invitation, and continued:

"But Ih reckon ma news ull keep. Ih'm powe'ful tyard. Done toted ma laigs clar out from Rexington."

Here, since cordial interest was withheld from her

in the reception of her kith and kin, she turned with quick appeal to Cinny Jones, whose eyes she found intent and wide on her. Then she looked agreeably over to the men mill-hands, whose eyes were also fixed on her. She shut her own a little, pushed her heavy hair back from her hot white brow, and laughed—her low, sweet little laugh—begun, then too suddenly broken short—bird notes, promise of further sweetness quelled, or as though one damned the flush ripple of a silver stream.

"Ih done ast 'n every haouse in town fer Mis' Euston, 'n, suh, ef Lily Bud hedn't of bin hyar, Ih prob'ly would jest of stayed with these hyar ladies 'n gentlemen—Ih would, tew!"

And she would have been welcome. Already Lily Bud was forgotten in this gray-shawled girl with the luminous, pretty smile and gray eyes that lit her face like stars. In the pale, tired child there was charm, a subtle wand to smite hearts open all the world over. Even these uncouth creatures felt it in their own way, and responded. Cinny, with true feminine enmity to any woman possessing qualities that tell toward masculine approval, gave a hitch to her fat shoulders and looked doubtfully at Amanda. But Gerkins nodded pleasantly.

"Hungry? Well, Ih reckon hyar's some vittles fer yo'. Er's a good fo' miles out hyar. Keep the track?"

"No, suh; the road."

"Come to work to the mills?"

"Reckon I hev': come to fin' ma sister."

She turned to Lily Bud.

So these were sisters. And this was the equivocal welcome the little girl had received. It was a shame. Lily Bud felt her short triumph to be over, and she was discomfited. She said sullenly:

"You-all come laiike a ghos', slippin' in on me. Whayre'd yo' come from, anyhow? How's gran'maw? Ih reckoned you wasn't goin' to leave her. No, suh! she ain't come tew?"

The brilliance died out of the young sister's face. She unfastened and threw back her gray shawl.

Lily Bud repeated:

"She-all ain't come to the mills, tew?"

"Gran'maw's dayde," Amanda said, and looked dry-eyed at her sister.

Her fountains of grief had been exhausted long ago.

A message of death was expected by them all, and one by one the men rose awkwardly, but with comprehending courtesy, and left the kitchen. They withdrew to the little porch, and there, smoking their pipes, they talked in an undertone of the new-comer.

But to Cinny Jones delicacy was an unknown quality. She settled herself on her pine seat and remained to listen, thrilled with vulgar anticipation of a death and funeral account.

Lily Bud's face softened a little. She began to cry.

In an undertone, which in order to follow Cinny, her grimy cheeks shining with excitement, leaned almost into the sisters' faces, Amanda slowly told her simple account of "Gran'maw's" death, her own flight and illness, then said, and with effort:

"Ih come from Rexington—bin thayre ever sense day befo' yesterday. Ih seen you' husban'." Lily Bud dried her eyes. "Yesterday Ih was done comin' out to fin' you-all, but Dex Falloner reg'larly run again et. So we went to the Co't Haouse 'n waited twell the Jedge calls 'Henry Euston!' Well, suh, thayre suttinly wasn't no one fer to speak agen him, so he came out."

She paused in her account, which was so incoherent as almost to baffle the curious Cinny.

"Snakes!" Cinny murmured. "So they let him out, suh!"

This news was vital indeed to his wife. Euston free! He would look her up and make enough money when he was sober, so that she need not work in the hated mills. He would get jealous again of the boss, perhaps. Anyway, now she need not wonder what reply

to give to Mr. Bachman in the morning when she went to work. She was at once alarmed and pleased.

"Whar's Henry?"

Amanda started violently. It was the first time she had heard Euston's Christian name, and it seemed to her like a liberty on her sister's part. She gave Lily Bud a hostile glance, and said sharply:

"That's what you-all call him?"

Lily Bud giggled.

"Well, et's his name, ain't it? You-all don't reckon Ih call him '*Mister Euston*,' ef he does give himself airs?"

Amanda interrupted quickly:

"He's to Rexington, 'n he-all's a-goin' to stay thayre."

"Fer what?"

"Tell you-all seeks him out 'n tell him you'll be good."

If Amanda expected or desired an outburst of angry refusal from the capricious flirt she knew her sister to be, she was disappointed. Lily Bud's face was dismayed. What if she lost her husband? Her last few days' experience proved to her that before her lay only a life of utter shame, and whether or not she might have attempted it with no moral shrinking, she was too young to desire it. Then she was afraid of the fights and the blows. Griscom had come near beating her. More important than all, Euston had roused in this silly heart something that resembled affection dimly. She wanted Euston back again. She said petulantly:

"He-all dew drink so po'ful; I reckon you-all ain't got no idee."

Amanda smiled subtly.

"He ain't drunk fer weeks, anyhow," she said, "'nd ef you-all acts pretty, like's not he'll give it up."

"I reg'larly cayn't go ter-night, but I'll git a half-day to-morrer."

Amanda's heart sank. Unconsciously she had hoped for another reception of her news. She had seen the

Daco beaux thrown over one by one, and for good, after shorter periods than this, and the unexpected clinging astonished and caused her pain. All day since his release from gaol she and Euston had been wandering together through the streets of Rexington. He had showed the town shops to her country eyes, and before the novelties she stood bewildered, both of them quite unconscious of the extraordinary figures they presented. Neither had a penny in the world, but Dexter Falloner, who had presented himself to the manager of the Ralings Mills for a job, had been advanced fifty cents. He gave twenty-five of this to Amanda, and she had bought Euston and herself food for the day. The weather was warm. He would sleep somewhere or other, and they parted, shaking hands at the beginning of the road to the mills. She remembered it all now with a great pang, as she remarked Lily Bud's eagerness, and acknowledged her sister's rights. How hateful Lily Bud's mouth was! It had lied to her so often, and said such mean things to grandmaw. She wondered if *he* had ever kissed it. Of course! This was what people married for!

Here Lily Bud, whose train of thought brought her up to a sigh and whimper, looked curiously at her sister.

"You-all suttinly mus' of got the fevah agin; yo' eyes is wild and yo' cheeks is so rayde." She yawned and stretched out her arms. "Them darned spools!" she said. "Ih cayn't run enough sides yet to pay fer ma bode."

Here Cinny broke in, now that all the Henchley secrets were disclosed to her.

"You-all suttinly should take this hyar gyrl to bade," she said kindly. "Gerkins will fix yo up, ma'am."

"Ih kin pay," said Amanda hastily, "and Ih reckon to git work to-morrer. Is thayre any?"

Gerkins appeared on the scene, followed by a shuffling negro in rags, a humble, brow-beaten creature who slunk in softly to attract as little notice as possible. The host replied to Amanda's question:

"Work? Wal, I reckon! I've lived in the world forty-eight years, 'n I've seen all kynds of yarn run out, but thayre brand ez always handy. Whar you want to work, ma'am?"

She liked him, and smiled, tired as she was.

"To wharever they're a-lookin' fer 'Manda Henchley," she said. "Ih ain't particular. Can Ih get bode hyar?"

"You kin tew," he said heartily. "Thar's nobody but Mis' Euston and Mis' Jones 'n the lof'. I reckon you-all kin fit in with 'em."

Chapter VI

HALF an hour later she lay by her sister in the loft. Lily Bud, curled up in a ball of comfortable drowsiness, fell quickly asleep, but Amanda, wide-eyed, stared into the darkness of her new surroundings. In the few hours of rest and repose granted to the Children of Toil the village at this end of the town was comparatively silent. But after a little Amanda fancied she heard the wind stirring in the trees, and to her tired, overwrought senses it appeared a-rustling and a-whispering in the forest near the shanty where she had been born and bred. Lying straight on the hard mattress, she listened, ready to sleep, but incapable of doing so whilst anything so sweet was in her ears. There was comfort in the noise. It brought her grandmother clearly to her mind, and she drew an aching breath of child-like yearning for the comfort of that loving heart. She caught a sob in her throat and held it fast. Bewitched by her memories, she lost thought of the sound itself after a time, and mused and dreamed. But the noise, if wind in forest trees it indeed were, should vary, alter and become wailing and profound. It lacked the beauty of modulation she was accustomed to hear. As she listened more attentively, the effect was only to tease and worry her. Whence this burring, humming, whizzing? She got softly out of bed, went across the loft to the open window, and looked out. The broad, treeless road between the shanties lay before her. In the street's centre was a tall lamp-post, and an oil-lamp brightly lit stared into her sleepless eyes. At the head of the street rose what appeared to her a giant building with argus eyes alight. Each window shone wickedly forth out of the brick face, mocking the night and grinning at sleep. Alive, active, enemy of rest and

repose, it hummed, buzzed, whirred and sung its epic of Labour and Toil at the cost of brain and body and soul.

This was the mill.

Amanda looked upon it for the first time as, leaning bare-shouldered, bare-armed, in her single under-garment, she stared at the prodigy.

It greeted her with a mechanical, strident, monotone voice, and this was the sound the poor little forest-born had mistaken for the winds of midsummer blowing through the pines!

Chapter VII

SHE had scarcely fallen asleep before she sprang up with a start, clutching Lily Bud.

"What's that?"

"You-all is suttinly a fool!" Her sister reluctantly opened his eyes. "Thaat's th' mill."

Ah! it had another voice than the burring undertone. A call, this time sharp, not to be disguised or mistaken for anything but command.

"The mill?" repeated the stranger. "What's et a-doin' so-fer?"

"Why, et's to get up. Et's fo' o'clock."

Lily Bud, however, did not stir. She had learned already by weary experience that this call was ruthlessly early. There was yet a half-hour's snoozing before she must rise.

Cinny Jones, too, was immovable, but the possibility of dozing was past for Amanda, and by the time the whistle ceased she was alive for her new day. Little by little she distinguished things in the room—Cinny's garments hanging on the wall, a calico wrapper, sun-bonnet, and a little apron belonging evidently to a child. By her own bed hung a scarlet cashmere dress trimmed with satin bands; a straw hat covered with roses crowned the peg. Amanda had seen these elegant garments the night before by candlelight without remarking aloud on them. They were evidently Lily Bud's possessions. On the coverlid of the piece quilt lay Lily Bud's hand, already somewhat altered by work, the nails broken, the knuckles ingrained with dirt. Amanda saw her sister's wedding-ring. As she looked at it with blinking eyes it made a ring of pain around her heart. Like her sister, she had gone unwashed to bed; travel-stain had made her own

hands unsightly, but toil had not blunted the fine little instruments. Her finger-ends were soft, her nail unbroken. In the dim light of growing day she regarded her palm—held it up to her eyes and tried to discern her first finger-mount, with the Love Marriage Mark, but it was scarcely light enough to see. With a sigh astonishingly bitter for one so young and untutored she let the little hand fall.

Although Crompton had not aroused the occupants of the loft, Amanda could hear others astir in the kitchen below. Presently came billowing up in a great column the eternal evidence in shanty life of the preparing of food—smoke, blue, thin, a veritable curtain of smells, foul and disgusting, and with it, enveloped in it, came a little girl, who climbed the ladder and softly crept up into the loft. She went across to the bed where Cinny Jones' enormous form occupied nearly all the space. She was snoring, delightfully dozing in this last hour of possible repose before night again. But there was a narrow strip of place, and stealthily as a cat the child crept upon it, not even slipping out of her dress. After a few moments she began to shake and shake and shake. Vainly she tried to stiffen her back, and control the chills. Cinny grunted, turned over, and awoke.

"Lay still, cayn't yo'?"

"Cayn't," said the child; "they're suttinly po'ful bad this hyar mo'nin'."

"What you-all come fer, anyhow?" asked the mother. "Et ain't mo'n five."

"Ih wuz reg'lar tew sick fur ter spin," said the little voice. Her words rattled between her teeth, and she shook them out like dice. "He-all tole me to go home."

"You suttinly is a little devil," said her mother agreeably. "Ih'd lick yer hide of Ih thought yo'-all put on them chills."

The new-comer to this prison antechamber had left her bed and slipped into her wrapper.

"Th' secon' whistle ain't blowed," Cinny informed

her. "What you-all so spry fer? Thet thayre's fer folks to git th' vittles raydy. They-all don't seem ter think no one wants ter sleep in Crompton!"

Amanda came over towards Cinny.

"Thet little gyrl suttinly hez got the chills, right bayde."

Cinny grunted again.

"Ef et's put on fer show——"

"Et's quite a pore show," said the other succinctly. The child lay before her half dozing, in spite of her long shakings that made the bed tremble. "Whar she come from?"

"Th' mill."

Again the word! And faster and faster the ogre loomed upon the horizon before the disciple and the victim, which Amanda surely, unless Fate prevented, must become. Like horrid forms in a nightmare, pursuing, advancing, fascinating, repelling, the mill was drawing towards her, was drawing her to it. It would crush, fall upon her, wipe her out of youth and existence, as it will do others after her. The infant on the bed was nothing but skin and bones enveloped in shocking, filthy rags. Scrawny arms protruded from tattered sleeves; dark, greasy legs protruded from tattered skirts. The rags, as if ashamed of what they insufficiently covered, fell away, leaving the little body's pitiful nudity disclosed. Even to Amanda it was a wretched sight. The hill girl buttoning her wrapper stood looking down on the sacrifice.

"Does she work?"

"Right smart spooler," nodded Cinny.

"She looks peart," complimented Amanda.

Peart! The small face, framed by a hedge-like growth of hair filled with cotton, was archaically intelligent. It might have been an infant gargoyle, a weather-beaten, stained effigy on the Monument of Labour.

"She's right small ter work, ain't she?"

"When she ain't got no chills," said Cinny, "she kin work fo' nights out o' six. Night-shift is her job."

Thayre ain't so many children to et, and she keeps steadier. She pays fer her vittles."

Cinny covered the child with the coverlid as she spoke. She was praising an engine, a piece of human mechanism. If there was no maternal protection in the mass of selfish motherhood, there was pride.

"She ust t' be a great gyrl fer sleep," she said; "seems tho' she never cud git 'nough; but sence she works to the night-shift she don't even need ter sleep all day. Gerkin totes her up a cup o' coffee 'n some ham at noon—he's awful pretty t' her, he's tew—'n she jest swallers 'em down, he says, half asleep, 'n she gits up 'bout three o'clock 'n plays in thet yard till mill-time."

The repose of the bed and the warm covers, above all, exhaustion, were greater than the chills. The child had already, in the midst of their talk, fallen heavily asleep. Lily Bud was rising, and Cinny, too. She nodded at Amanda.

"I'll ask ma boss ter take yo' into th' weavin'-room. Yo'-all kin make good money, suh."

But Lily Bud said sulkily:

"Ih cayn't git yo'-all nuthin'. I'm green maself, 'n he-all gits so mad at me."

Her younger sister made no reply to this generous offer of aid.

"Is them you-all's close?" she asked abruptly.

Lily Bud, a pin in her mouth, nodded without speaking. Amanda regarded them hostilely. They were an insult to Euston. He had never paid for them, and she would not ask where they came from. Her expression was of scorn and displeasure, and it angered Lily Bud.

"What's th' matter of 'em?" she said tartly. "Ain't they pretty—much?"

Amanda made no reply.

"Henry don't need ter see 'em," Lily Bud explained. "*We'll go ter 'nother bo'din-haouse, 'n thay kin hang hyar.*"

"Not over ma bayde, they cayn't," Amanda hastily

threw her defiant reproof. "They'd gimme th' nightmare."

Lily Bud coloured, unhooked them, and taking them over to Cinny's hook, disposed them.

"I reckon Mis' Jones ain't so tichy. Ef she-all is, why, she kin say so."

But Mrs. Jones said nothing. The sun was now fully risen, and blandly shone in through the window through the thin cashmere dress. On the form of Lily Bud, who stood in the light, it threw gules, and in Amanda's eyes they were gules of visible shame.

Chapter VIII

It was high noon at the mill known as Crompton. To the world wagging its way noon is the bull's-eye of the day. It is the hour supreme to the fifteen hundred souls who at its magic stroke have already been six hours at labour; for them it is the centre of the day's importance. To these six hours add two, and you have the full day's work fixed by humane State laws in twenty-six States of the Union. Subtract from the first six one, and you have the agreeable day's work of the man of business. Subtract all, and you have the day of the leisure woman and man who represent consumers and purchasers of commodities. This pastime is for our amusement only, that we may judge, by the gentle art of comparison a little of the lives of certain men and women and *children* (God have mercy!). But we are not through our figures. Now, once again add seven hours to the original six (wider circle far from the bull's-eye of noon), and it is no wonder that the troop, at the clang of the twelve o'clock bell, drop their shackles as though they were electrically stricken off, and exclaim, lifting high their aching arms:

"The whistle! The bell!" (whichever it may be).
"Thank God!"

It was noon at Crompton.

No trees grew on the sandy tract in front of Mr. Jacob Grismore's beautiful mill. Nor grass nor shrub presented a touch of nature; no glimpse or flash of colour cool and sweet inspired the eye and sense—broke the eternal monotony of yellow stretch. It was as though kindly Nature were ashamed to show her face in this desolate region relinquished to commerce. The implacable face of the mill regarded in blank triumph the landscape.

It reigned supreme. Here labour was king, and leisure a paltry thing that slipped in for forty minutes out of twenty-four hours to find itself so much a stranger that no one knew what to do with it, and could scarcely make it welcome!

The soul of the mill might look out from over a hundred windows. Yet these eyes seemed blind; they were curtained by flying looms, by lightning speeders. They were darkened ever and again by the passing of human forms keeping interminable march up and down—up and down cotton-filled aisles.

The rays of the sun beat mercilessly down on Crompton, calling up from the filthy yards numerous stench, warming to active life whatever germs of disease and contagion were rife in the town. The hundreds who had slipped out were pitiful specimens of humanity, their clothes hanging on thin, exhausted bodies, their pale faces mocking the brilliancy of the day. They seemed more fitted for the habitations of shades than for living scenes. Within the mill a few workers lingered after the others had gone home for lunch. Before a set of speeders a little group of women bent over the food they had brought with them. One of them lived too far from the mill to go home and get back in the given time. The other was not well enough to walk there and back. The heat within the mill was less endurable than that without; the odour of steam and grease, added to that of humanity.

The steam was not entirely shut off, and an undertone—a semi-panting vibration—kept the monster in evidence to the little group at their luncheon, lest they might chance to dream of absolute freedom and repose.

One girl, seated on the floor in a nest of filth and grease, held between her knees a piece of newspaper containing a bit of bread and pork. This she ate with her teeth upon it, but her eyes, raised above her miserable repast, gazed out of the window at the aisle's end beyond the speeder's line, through which she saw a stretch of sunny sky. Perspiration ran down her cheeks;

her hair was darkened with it; and under her eyes were blue rings. The hands, busied with her wretched food, were discoloured with work. She put up the back of one to wipe her streaming face, and it left a dirty streak along the cheek. Her feet were bare; the collar of her brown wrapper was opened at the throat, disclosing a neck as white as snow. When she had finished her food (if so it could be called), she leaned against her speeding-frame and closed her eyes in the heat. Cinny Jones and Lily Bud sat talking near her. Lily Bud's grandmother would scarcely have known her. Fourteen hours a day in the mill had not thinned her; she was even fatter, but much older, and the flesh beneath her eyes rose puffily. She, too, was hot, greasy, and dirty; she seemed in good health and animal spirits. Her girlishness had disappeared, her figure was changed. The clothes at her waist were loosely knotted, and in front her dress rose well above the floor.

She was talking with animation to Cinny Jones, who listened and agreed with all she said. Her conversation was evidently a complaint. Cinny's atmosphere was tempting to confidences. She had all the secrets of the mill in her head, and her own as well.

"He-all ain't no good," Lily Bud continued in a contemptuous undertone. "No, he don't want I should speed! First it was spoolin' 'too hayrd on ma side'; now it's speedin' too hayrd on ma arms; he-all wants I should stay thar to the bodin'-ouse and do nothin'.

"Wal, that suttinly ain't hayrd to dew."

"It is hayrd, tew!" contradicted the other. "Who'll I talk to? Thayr ain't nobody but the ole niggarr thayr, en ef I wus to look at anybody full in the face, why, Henry'd hev his gun on him, like es not." She lowered her voice a little, and wiped her face on her cotton sleeve. "Why, who's goin' to pay fer our keep if I don't work?"

"Don't he make good money?" Cinny asked; and the wife laughed scornfully.

"Money?" she said. "He suttinly *weaves* all right, Henry does, but he spends every cent on drink, suh . . .!"

Here the reclining figure on the floor got up, and Amanda rose and came over to them.

"I ain't never seen him sober sence he got back from gaol," said Lily Bud to Cinny.

"That's a lie!"

Lily Bud turned indolently, and fixed an insolent look on her sister; her lip curled.

"Et's the truth," she said. "I am married to a drunken man; an' ef I didn't come hyar en speed fourteen hours a day, why, I reckon I wouldn't hev a bayde to lie on to."

Amanda faded paler. She was so white that even her nose looked pinched.

"It's a lie!" she repeated; "and you-all never did tell the truth sence yo' was bo'n. Who's the best weaver to Crompton? He done beat the record max'mum speed; thar ain't a man to the mills can tech him!"

The little thing spoke with pride that would have sat well on his wife. She drew her thin body up in her queer dress; the veins in her neck commenced to swell and palpitate.

Lily Bud regarded her with curiosity and a dawning intelligence in her eyes, and for once in her life she was attentive to the quick words that Amanda was powerless to restrain.

"Thayr ain't a girl to this country thet's got a man like you-all. Why don't you stay to the house, and keep it like gran'maw told us tew—clean and pretty?"—she looked at her sister firmly—"and keep washed up and pretty, 'stead of showin' yo'self to the mill—*now, as yo' is?*"

Here Lily Bud made a desperate move forward, and struck her sister a quick, short slap in the face. The pale cheek reddened under the blow.

"You shut up, gyrl!"—advancing her chin toward her sister; "though ef you-all is so quick to remember me of grandmaw—why she sayde, '*When a pusson kin tell you the way to the well, it's a po'ful good sign he's drunk the water thayr.*' How you-all know so much 'bout

Henry? . . . I reckon I'd be doin' better things 'fore I stole my sister's husban'."

Amanda's patience was at its ebb. The suffering of the past weeks had worn away her self-control, and had developed a morbid rebellion against the state of domestic misery in which the man she loved was a victim. She had grown to hate her sister, and revolted bitterly against the bond which Euston had forged in hot haste; and although no word had ever passed between them which the wife might not have heard, she felt sure that in herself lay the influence which could keep this man from evil and drink and hell.

She raised her own hand threateningly.

"Don' you dast speak to me so!"

But Lily Bud was roused to a greater fury than Amanda knew, and she was obliged to defend herself against a cat-like onslaught from her elder sister. The two locked in a hand-to-hand struggle, and were nothing but a pair of panting, furious young animals. Although Amanda's first blow was defence, the attack altered. The aisle of the mill was all too narrow for the sisters' struggle. Amanda, the less angry, and the stronger and better fitted to overcome, got an easy victory. She forgot Lily Bud's condition; she fought with all the vigour and strength of youth, and she had the satisfaction, such as it was, in a second or two of seeing her sister stagger, and her lips grow white. Lily Bud put her hand to her head, and fell backward full length on the floor. Amanda was herself again.

Cinny alone had watched the battle, for the hands had not returned from lunch. When Lily Bud fell, Cinny took flight, and just at this time the mill-bell rang. The noon hour was past, and the power, once more panting and humming, echoed through the mill. Cinny returned, scuffling after the boss from the spooling room, whom she had persuaded to come to the scene of attack. Bachman was the young Yankee who had brought the Daco "hands" to Crompton. He now wandered in, as he had been in the habit of doing, to direct his very questionable

attentions to Amanda Henschley. He found her bending in tears and terror over the figure of Lily Bud.

"What's up, little girl?"

She raised her streaming eyes to him.

"I reckon I done killed my sister."

"Oh, no," he said soothingly—"oh, no, you haven't. She's a bad lot, anyway. You go and get some water, Cinny."

When the dipper came he dashed the contents mercilessly over the face of poor Lily Bud, but her eyes remained terrifyingly closed and her lips terrifyingly blue. She was so changed that even Bachman himself began to think the affair more serious than usual.

"You go down and call her husband from the weaving-room, Mrs. Jones, and we'll get her home; she can't work any more to-day."

He looked at Amanda, who, in silent contrition and fright, was rubbing her sister's hands.

"If I was any other boss here, I'd put you right out of the mill; indeed, I ought to by rights—the both of you. You are squabbling here all the time. What did she do to you?"

Amanda shook her head; tears stopped her speech. Across her shoulder hung a long strand of roping which she had thrown over it when she stopped work. Snowy speeders full of yarn were being rolled along in a hand-car by a mill-boy, who was obliged to come to a stand-still, for Lily Bud's prostrate form blocked the way. Amanda had taken her sister's head on her lap. Lily Bud was moaning under her breath now—a dreary sound; her teeth were set. In the eyes of the boss she was only a bundle of dirty rags now rendered quite useless from a commercial point of view. Bachman gave a quick, cautious look around, and saw there was no one near to remark his cowardice but the little boy with the hand-cart. He said to him shortly:

"Come, get along with you; go down the other aisle." Then he touched Amanda's bent head, put his arm around her. "I will let you stay in Crompton, and won't lock

you up, as you deserve to be, if you will give me a kiss."

Under her pallor, the defenceless girl blushed and shook her head timidly.

He said brutally: "All right; out you go, then! Mr. Grismore won't have these fights here."

Sick with disgust, she lifted up her face; its dirt and distress might surely have exempted her from this ordeal, but Bachman stooped down determinedly. He was, however, debarred his prey, for Euston and Cinny Jones came up to the group.

Chapter IX

EUSTON, leaning against the railing of his boarding-house, looked moodily out into the close of a long, hot day. In a rocking chair, as far from the kitchen as she could get, and therefore on the front porch, his landlady sat peeling potatoes. She regarded the Euston part of her household with scant friendliness. She had no fancy for sick folks—it was all she could do to keep contagion away; and to have Lily Bud's long illness thrust upon her in no degree improved her temper. Euston, moreover, was deep in board arrears.

"Doctor bin hyar?"

"No."

"H'm! he-all's too peart to come, I reckon. He knows he ain't goin' 'get paid nothin'."

It was Saturday noon; the operatives clustered here and there, like flies, on the steps of their shanties. Some had taken refuge from the heat under the shadow of the mill; little groups clung close to the brick wall, languid, still, and tired. Having no habits but labour, no amusements provided, they were ill at ease in liberty, and once the excessive fatigue drained out of their bones by a few hours of leisure, they would return to their Monday serfdom with little reluctance.

"Do you think the doctor won't come any more?" Lily Bud's husband asked, knocking his pipe's ashes against the railing.

"I dunno—like's not to drop away. I've seen him do it 'fore now, 'n leave th' critter to die right thayr in the lof", tew."

She nodded encouragingly above stairs. Her tone was hard and snappish. If it had been Lily Bud, she would have railed at her, or at any one of her other

boarders; but with Euston, despite her natural grievances, she couldn't be more than cool. This man, since the day he had carried Lily Bud home, had never drunk a drop of liquor, and had nursed her like a woman.

Now she said, as she dropped one after another of her long potato-curls in the pan: "I reg'larly dew hev tew hev a few dollars, suh, 'n you-all's got no better to dew then ter go 'n git a few coupons."

"You mean borrowing of the company for my labour?"

"Yes, suh, thet's jest what I mean—I done et. I ain't got a cent of money tew ma name tell ma husban' done weave 'nough cloth to pay for this hyar haouse rent. Look er thayr." She peered out over her spectacles wet with the heat. "Thet's Cinny Jones' little gyrl, I suttinly dew believe."

Coming along the street, her bare feet deep in the sand of it, her ragged dress fluttering about her naked legs, Milly Jones was slowly advancing towards the Euston's boarding-house.

"Reckon she done come from your sist'-'n-law; that gyrl ain't no more 'n a murderer fer me!" The woman snapped out this conscientiously whenever Amanda's name was mentioned.

Euston went down the steps to meet Milly, and not to subject Amanda's message, if there was one, to unfriendly ears.

The ragged creature lifted her unchildlike eyes to him. From either side of her mouth ran a little stream of snuff, black pathway for the nasty narcotic.

"Well, Milly, what is it? Did you want me?"

"I suttinly did tell 'Mandy Henchley I'd git some news fer her. How's Mrs. Euston?"

As Euston continued to walk in the opposite direction, the little thing pattered along at his side.

"Where's Amanda?"

"To the mill."

"Why isn't she out? It's Saturday!"

"She-all was goin' ter wait thayr twell I fetched the news."

Euston regarded his messenger with pitying curiosity. The mat of hair was so thick that, as he looked down upon her from his height, it was like a haystack; inter-woven with it were bits of cotton thread. Milly Jones was very thin, her neck so small that it made her head, with its thick brush of hair, abnormally large.

"What are you going to do to-day?" he asked kindly.

She wiped her mouth on her ragged sleeve; and something like a smile traversed her stolid face.

"Why, 'Manda, she suttinly 'clars she's goin' to learn me a letter!"

"*A letter?*"

"Yes, suh; 'pears like's they's letters . . . she-all sayes. A is fer 'Manda!" she giggled with delight. Learning had for her the charm of play. Her slavery knew nothing of either.

When Euston was sober his faculties worked with lightning velocity, making up for lost time, scoring for sodden, disgraceful days and weeks and months. In the trotting figure he seemed to see a multitude, an army of miserable, brutalized beings; they were swarming about him; a group of these, boys and girls, none of them over seven years old, playing in a heap of refuse before a shanty door were all toilers. From his empty pocket's depth he brought up a two-cent piece. He gave it to her.

"Run home, Milly. Thank you for coming. I'll go and take the message to Amanda myself."

Chapter X

To poor Amanda the ensuing weeks had been repetitions of toil and weariness sharpened by distress and something not unlike fear. Lily Bud was terribly ill; if she should die, Amanda would be little less than a murderess, and it did not need the indignant looks of Cinny Jones and her not too veiled insinuations to thoroughly abet the pangs of conscience under which her sensitive mind withered. In austere, exaggerated self-torture, she refused to see any advance whatsoever on the part of those whose inclination was not to blame the little one so much, but Lily Bud more! She ventured not a foot towards the Eustons' boarding-house; and was given to understand by Cinny that it was just as well for her to keep away, and, in truth, she was glad to do so. Euston stayed close to his wife, and Amanda's news, hearsay—garbled by some was by Cinny made as bad as possible. Mrs. Jones was frankly antagonistic to Amanda, who had espoused the helplessness of her child, a creature never supposed to have a cause at all until the hill-girl, mill labourer like the rest, appeared and made one. Milly Jones had the habit of clinging to Amanda whenever they were free from the mill. When it happened, as it did sometimes, that she returned from her night work before the others were gone, Amanda would wash the little thing's face and the thin fingers with their claw-like nails one by one; the pathetic, inert hand, which for years had been at toil, gave itself up to the soothing touch with keen enjoyment. It would have been a sight not without pathos possibly even to a cotton manufacturer himself, could he have looked in at dawn on that fetid loft and seen the girl in her coarse dress leaning

over the sleeping child, picking the cotton from the fouzle of hair, washing away what she could of grease and mill dirt, then girding up her own loins for her toil of the day. But there were no eyes that looked in; certainly the eyes of Grismore were not wet with the moisture of pity at this period when, with a poor season, the pay was cut throughout the State, and Milly Jones, working from sunset to dawn, made eight cents. Certainly Cinny's eyes were not softened.

"Ih declar' to the worl'," she growled at Amanda, "ef you-all hedn't bin so po'ful good at fightin', they'd of bin another child fer you to nuss."

Amanda wept bitterly at the gibe.

Bachman took this opportunity to double his annoyance of her, and joined her constantly as, when the others were at lunch, she sat before her speeders over her own food. His jokes and innuendoes were only half understood, but his efforts to kiss her needed not to be translated; there was a dim sense in her of impending peril, the more keen because of a miserable fascination in his constant society. She was terribly alone—utterly cast off and devoured by dumb despair.

What there was in this ill-fed little mill-hand to attract her overseer could only be explained by the fact that Amanda, despite her deplorable condition, was growing prettier every day. Moreover, she washed her face—whenever she could, and it gave her among her comrades a distinction indeed. She was shedding the awkward cocoon of girlhood; her body was rounding; her sufferings, combined with her naturally sweet expression of mouth, imparted to her an appealing attractiveness. If Falloner had been within reach she would have asked him to take her away from Bachman and Crompton—to tramp the world over, if need be, until a country was found where there were no mills—no mills! She grew sick at heart with longing to wake of her own free will in the morning, when daylight had not already claimed the world and "dressed it." To

go to bed not so sore with fatigue that even sleep hesitates to steal to the feverish, restless body! She had been born free, and she chafed in her bondage as restlessly as ever black woman did in the cornfields; the girl before her speeders was as truly a slave as her darker sister in times past.

This Saturday afternoon she had finished cleaning her machine, and as she refilled her ropers, deep in dreams of the backwoods, the clicking mill sound seemed to soften to calls like the birds who used to nest in the clearing. There were nightingales there, too! How often she had listened to their enchanting song! The speeders swam before her eyes. She was crying.

"What's the matter, little girl?"

It was Bachman. She turned to meet his eternal smile fixed on her. The tears dried on her lashes.

"What's you-all waant of me, anyway?"

The Yankee liked her defiance, and her snapping rebuke gave spice to a pursuit that with many of the girls would have been tame indeed.

"Come," he said, "now let's get along all right together, Amanda! I want you to just get right out of the mill. I'll take you up to Rexington, get you a pretty little room, and buy you some elegant clothes."

He was so near that she held her roper between them as a kind of defence.

"Ef this yar waz a knife," she murmured, "Ih suttinly would stick it into you-all."

"Oh, no, you wouldn't!"

Her anger made her prettier. Before she knew what had taken place, he had seized her in his arms, but as he held her, murmuring all he knew of endearment, an inertia came over her, a singular impotence; disgust and disinclination melted. . . . They were entirely alone in the distant part of the mill. At this critical moment steps fell along the aisle near them. The overseer, with an oath, let her go. She sprang from him, and fled to the far end of the speeding side, where she stood trembling, sick with shame and excitement, as

Henry Euston appeared, the second time close on Bachman's amours. He gave a quick glance from the boss to the trembling girl.

"I came to tell you some news of Lily Bud."

Amanda ran to him, and put her hand on his arm.

He little dreamed what salvation he represented; on the contrary, he thought himself out of place, and his face was hard.

"Take me to ma sister," she panted; "Ih want to see Lily Bud."

Whistling, and thrusting his hands into his pockets, Bachman left them, and Euston led Amanda along the aisles out of the mill. But no sooner were they alone together and she safe than the shyness she always felt in his presence came over her. She longed to appeal to him, to cling to him, but the very character of her affection for him made it impossible.

"Let's go along over here a little way and find some shade."

He led her to where a row of new mill-houses were in process of building; the work, deserted on this Saturday afternoon, left the scaffolding a shelter from the sun and the boards a seat for these two.

"Lily Bud is coming along all right," Euston informed her before she had a chance to ask. "She'll be up and around in a little while now."

Amanda's expression was flushed and grateful. She wore ever her graceless cotton wrapper with charm. Perhaps as much to protect her face from him as from the sun, she put on her sun-bonnet; it completely shut her away.

"Mrs. Cardlan thinks the doctor won't come any more. We haven't any money to pay him, and I owe her already for three weeks." He spoke his troubles out to her selfishly, no doubt, but the fact of having a human being to speak to, and one, moreover, whose sympathy was so quick as Amanda's, was too strong a temptation to be resisted. "I find I can sell myself, as it were, to the Company; that is, I can go and get

some coupons and work them off. I hate it," he continued; "it's absolute slavery, but it will only be the last grain of self-respect gone." She remained silent, and he followed his thoughts: "It's better, of course, than to owe that poor woman, and I must have the doctor a few times more."

Here Amanda turned her sun-bonnet to him, and he saw her face framed by it.

"My God!" he exclaimed, "what a sight you are, Amanda! You're killing yourself." The pinched suffering of the little face struck him above his own anxieties. "What's the matter, child? Are you worried about Lily Bud? It wasn't your fault."

Amanda was beyond tears: she had shed them night after night, day after day, at her speeder; they were all gone now, and her eyes were hard and dry. The control she was exercising not to sob and wring her hands before him made her body rigid as a little pole.

"Ih reg'larly ort to be killed! Ih didn't go fer to hurt her, that away. Ih wist somebody would kill me—Ih dew so!"

Euston took both her hands in his—poor, thin, convulsed little hands. He said tenderly:

"Look here, Amanda, don't you go on so; you're a good little girl—the best little girl I ever saw. Everybody knows just what she is. If she is my wife, I say it. I won't have you fret your life out so; do you hear?"

She drew a long, sobbing breath, but even as he was speaking she took heart again; his tone of tenderness fell softly about her bleeding heart.

"It ain't only the worry," she said, and hesitated. "Et's the work. I'm so tyard!" She longed to throw herself in the arms of the pale, dark man whose eyes, fastened on her, were so deep and full of kindness and pity. "Ih don't reg'larly get no sleep. When Ih come in, Ih cyan't skeercely git up them laddah stayres; et seems ez ef thar's somethin' a-holdin' onto ma laigs, 'n' ef Ih dew fall to sleep the mill sings 'n' ma hayde

all night. Ih reckon et's a-callin' me 'n' straitchin' anot ets han's like et's boun' to hev me, sleep or wake."

Comfort came to her as she talked, but she disguised the existence of the greatest danger of all—Bachman. Embarrassment, shame, fear kept her silent about the worst haunting evil. The mill could only wear her body out of the hard life from which she was better away; this other peril could corrode her soul.

Euston held her hands strongly whilst she talked.

"These hyar las' nights seems ef Ih could git a leetle rest ef the mills ud rest tew! Whar Ih bode, you kin hyar it all night, 'n' Ih cayn't bear to think o' Cinny Jones' little gyrl spinnin', spinnin' all night long." (This one who pitied so readily was scarcely more than a child herself!) "Th' other day th' boss fetched Milly to ma speedin'-frames, 'n' got her to clean the frames. It's awful dang'ros," she said. "Ih seen one gyrl git her haynd ketched thayr."

"Don't you clean any machinery, Amanda!" Euston's tone was quite different from any she had ever heard him use. She looked up surprised.

"Why, Ih suttinly am boun' tew!"

"No," he said slowly, "you are not. There's the spool-room. . . ."

She shook her head and flushed.

"Ih don' want tew go thyar; Ih make bettah money speedin'."

Euston had forgotten who was foreman of the spool-room.

"I can get you put there—it's safe and clean—and you have no one but yourself to keep."

Without reply to this, she made one of her hands free, and took from the bosom of her dress a handkerchief tied up in a knot at one end. She undid the knot, and took out a five-dollar bill.

"Ih saved this hyar—for Lily Bud; et's all Ih could lay up."

Euston exclaimed: "Saved!"

"Why, Ih make clost ter fifty cents a day, 'n' Ih

saved up sence two weeks 'n' more." Seeing his face so working in its expressions, and expecting a refusal, she pressed the bill upon him. "You-all gotter tek et—et's all Ih kin dew to make up to her."

The bill fluttered between them. Euston's eyes were fixed on his sister-in-law with intensity.

"You couldn't have saved up five dollars, Amanda."

"Ih did so!" she flamed. "Where'd you-all think et come from?"

"You only make three dollars a week, and there's your board to pay," he persisted.

"Ih ain't paid no bode," she said slowly, her eyes on her hands.

"What do you mean?"

"Gerkins he done give me free, tew weeks. His nigger's took sick, 'n' Ih do chores fer him when Ih gets in from th' mill, 'n' Ih gits up 'n' cooks th' vittles fer th' bo'ders."

Euston gave a cry; he passed his hand over his pale brow. He bit his lips, and murmured things she could not fathom.

"Ef you don't tek it, I'll never speak to you agin. . . ."

"*Take it!*" Once more he put his hands over the devoted ones. "Not if I was starving to death . . . not if it could buy for me all the things which would have made me a man . . . a man! Put it up again . . . there, in your handkerchief—so. Take it, and pay your next week's board, and rest—and rest!" His eyes were full of tears.

"Don't go fer tew feel so," she whispered gently; "all that ain't the worst!" Her words were low, and in his suffering he did not hear them. "How you-all git the doctah, then?"

"I'll sell myself if needful," he said. "Don't you worry, Amanda; we'll pull through."

He controlled his emotion, and tried to smile at her. She timidly touched his arm with her hand.

"You-all ain't drinkin' none."

She never called him by name, but he had not observed it.

"I haven't drunk a drop for two weeks."

Her face was eloquent; it said plainer than any words of preaching what she felt and what she asked.

He nodded, and said quietly: "I have to *want* to stop, Amanda. You can't understand me; I don't understand it myself. I have to care enough whether or no to swear off. Just the past few weeks I had something to do. I couldn't do it and drink too. . . ."

"Take care of Lily Bud?"

He looked full into her eyes.

". . . I was determined she should get well. . . ."

Amanda murmured, "Of co'se."

"For your sake," he said.

She grew deadly cold, and, until he quietly removed his eyes from hers, she sat fascinated, her lips parted. Euston now let her hands go, and in another tone of voice, quick and practical, said:

"What's Bachman to you, Amanda?"

She gasped at the sudden change of subject so barefacedly broached by him.

"Why, he suttin' ain't nothin' at all!"

"Then, for God's sake keep clear of him. Don't let him touch you—don't let him kiss you. Get married, if you can—the sooner the better—but don't be cheap."

The character of his wife made him put a double bitterness in his tone with the last words.

Amanda grew fire-red; a sea of blood must have lain dormant around her heart, for floods of colour poured on her face and neck.

"Ih know what you-all seen," she managed to get out. "Ih hate him, 'n you-all needn't to jedge every gyrl by the one you merried."

She got up proudly, and so stood in her miserable garb, her head thrown back. She was beside herself with wounded pride and love.

"Thayre ain't never but one man kissed me what Ih

call kiss—'n' ef he's forgot it Ih ain't, 'n' nobody 'll ever git another chance. . . . "

They both stood facing.

What man—who did she mean? As he wondered, it came to him in a flash: the night at the ladder stairs of the backwoods shanty. That kiss—that wonderful thrilling kiss, to taste whose like again and again he had married the wrong woman. He made a step forward.

"*Amanda!*"

She was emaciated and frail and worn, but her eyes were humid—filled with a fire and feeling that transfigured her to absolute beauty; her red lips, with their pretty melancholy droop, were alluring.

She drew back from him, and her face hardened quite suddenly, as if she recognized all that separated them, all the blindness of his mad act when he made the miserable choice that divided them. Then, with the caprice that made her nature feminine and charming, she laughed a little, and, drawing near him, she whispered:

"Ih reckon you-all stole ma pink ribbon; you ain't chancet to got et nowhars?"

Euston blushed. As the reading of the whole matter explained to him now his error and mistake, he seemed to see again the little fluttering bit of colour on the grass by the pool, and a sharp pang shot through him.

"What ribbon, Amanda?"

"Why," she said, smiling, "Ih done lost mine by th' pond—the day we taked you-all in—'n' Ih suttinly did see et pinned to you-all's shirt when you waz sick."

Euston put his hand in his pocket, and drew out a bit of paper. Slowly he unfolded it—there lay the talisman. He held it out in his hand.

"I've kept it . . . up till now. I was going to throw it away one of these days. . . . Now that I know who it belongs to I would like to keep it still."

He raised his eyes to hers. She had many fancies and queer thoughts, and she thought his eyes looked clean, as though they had been washed, the whites were so

clear, the brown so shining; her own, tell-tale, ardent, dropped.

"Ih reckon you kin keep et . . . et's got ust to you-all by this. . . . Ih'm goin' home tew sleep. Ih'm clean wore out."

She turned her back on him, and went quickly away toward the settlement of shanties raised on their stilt-like elevations. Whatever feeling the interview roused in Euston, it greatly comforted Amanda.

Two weeks later saw Lily Bud, although still an invalid, able to be out again amongst the mill-hand world.

She was more jealous of her sister than angry with her. The quarrel's result, now danger was passed, had done her a good turn—the annoyance of motherhood was spared her. She said to Euston the day before he was to resume his work in the weaving-room:

"Thayre's bin a right nice gentleman hyar. Et's a minister; he's from Ireton Mills. He says thayre's a new mill yonder whar's thayre's better pay, 'n' he reg'larly thinks Ih ought to have a change o' air. Won't you-all carry me over to the new mill, Henry?"

He hesitated, then said decidedly: "I am bound to the Company."

"Fer how much, Henry?"

"Ten dollars."

To his great surprise, she took out a ten dollar bill and a five.

"He give it tew me—the minister; you-all ain't got no call ter look so," she said feverishly. "Ask Mis' Cardlan."

It was true; a tremulous ascetic priest had passed through Crompton on a sort of missionary visit from mill town to mill town. Out of his slender purse he had given the invalid this money to help her, as she had pointed out to him, to flee with her husband from the dangerous proximity of a designing sister-in-law, and to begin a new life in new mills. As her husband still made her no answer, Lily Bud leaned forward from

her rocker, and said in a voice weak with sickness and sharp with jealousy:

"Ef et's fer that thayre gyrl what tried to murder me ez you're stayin', why, Ih kin go alone, Henry Euston. . . ."

At his face she sank back whimpering. He had never struck her, but she was afraid of him now.

"We'll go to Ireton," he said, "on this minister's money; and if I ever hear a word like that from you again, I leave you, never to return. Do you hear me?"

And he forced her to answer "Yes."

Chapter XI

Now began for the sixteen-year-old toiler at her machines the actual battle for existence. Not a unique battle by any means. You may see her like any day if you will take a train to the heart of South Carolina, then penetrate to some mill-village where men, women, and children are weaving and spinning their lives into cotton cloth.

Euston and Lily Bud left Crompton, and Cinny Jones, when she brutally broke the fact to Amanda, felt a sense of pity at the start of dismay, the sudden dilation of the girl's eyes.

"Why, I ain't got nobody to own me!"

Poor little slave! the mill owned her; and she grew to be in some mysterious way part of it, its living soul, palpitating with its life. Grief at her desertion, loneliness and despair, wore her to a shred. Long before day she was at her speeders; when night came (blessed night, whose falling should surely smite the shackles from toil!)—long after the stars were out—in the artificial light of insufficient gas-jets, she was before the roppers which often she could not see for tears.

Trade was good in those days: labour was scarce, and all available human material was stuffed into the maw of the mill. Milly Jones was only one of hundreds of children whose tiny forms pattered up and down the roaring factory.

Fortunately for Amanda Henchley, Bachman was North on business for Mr. Grismore, otherwise he would have gained his long-pursued suit with the girl. She would have gone to him. Why not? Even her "kin" had cast her off, and wounded pride and love made her at times long to commit a rash, defiant act to prove her

indifference to fate. Her tender nature, loving and generous, pined, moreover, to expend itself on a beloved object; her heart's treasure-house—capable in unusual degree of containing infinite love—was too desolate and empty to bear. She had matured with singular rapidity, and the young vine had put all its gentle tendrils around one branch—Euston; his going had cruelly torn the child. Her heart was breaking.

There are primitive creatures such as this child in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Descendant of an unknown but distinct race, Amanda Henchley bore in her fine little body the flame of some high-spirited sensitive ancestor, whose loyalty, as well as lineaments, delicate frame, thin nostrils and pure contour were being portrayed again in the body of this poor white-trash girl. It cost her all she earned to live on pork and beans and coffee, and to sleep on straw. But she had no wants. "I ain't got no place to wear clothes *at*," she said to the images that sometimes came, when in the Sunday freedom she had a chance to grow—*ambitious!* Sundays she usually slept late, and then washed up and combed out her pretty hair, taking a pitiful pride in it, and taught Milly Jones to spell!

This was easy. Blessed work! The child adored her, and to please Amanda put all her eyes and ears and soul between the pages of the *Sewing Machine Circular*—their only book.

If a philanthropist in search of documentary facts had asked Amanda what she liked best to do, no subtle indications of intellectual strivings, no statistics for clubs and art classes would have been gained from her reply: "*To go to sleep!*" To crawl onto her mattress to drift into unconsciousness was the best thing in her miserable life.

Like all highly sensitive organisms, she loved the mysterious domains into which on certain nights—when she was not too tired—like a ship gently cradled, she slipped and sailed away. So intense and keen was her concentration on the image of Henry Euston that she

often dreamed of him. These fleeting visions where she was always happy made her existence endurable—indeed, kept her alive.

One evening, at the exchange of shifts from day to night, she met Milly trotting to the mill, and admonished her like a little mother.

“Say yo’ spellin’ aout laoud, Milly honey; et ull keep yo’ ’wake, ’n’ don’t git yo’ han’ ketched.”

She had a morbid horror of accidents, and lived nervously with the fear of some sudden calamity which should make her very hair rise with horror. And it came.

This night in particular—too tired to eat—she had thrown herself, dressed as she was, on her bed, and gone asleep with the vague exhortation that her world of dreams would open its doors to her.

She dreamed that she—and yet not she—a beautiful Amanda, stood in the field, and around her a tide of flowers (as she imagined flowers would be) ebbed and flowed like a sea. Across this lovely country a man was coming to her, his hands full of light. The gift he brought transfigured him. When he drew near, lo and behold, it was Henry Euston, but a new creature—strong, vigorous, happy, with shining eyes. In her sleep the mill girl sighed and stretched out her arms. The vision blurred, grew strange, diffused. She woke with a start. Cinny had leapt from her bed with a cry, and had flown downstairs before Amanda could thoroughly shake sleep from her body.

There were many voices below stairs, and the unnatural summons at night, to the presence of some dreaded thing, chilled her blood. She lay shivering for a long time, and then crept out of bed and down the ladder.

Beds are the chief furnishings of mill shanties; in every room, parlour and kitchen, one or more of them are to be found, as the house is but a place for sleep to those who have no leisure to live. Here this bed—suddenly vacated by the three men lodgers who shared it—seemed to the appalled eyes of Amanda to fill up the

whole world. Tossed and tumbled, it now sheltered the wreck of a little bark, too small to have been pushed forth into the perils of life's sea.

The three men mill hands and Gerkins, all in their night clothes, Cinny in her petticoats, a young mill girl, one of the spinners on the night-shift, crowded around the bed. Milly Jones for once was the object of solicitude and care.

Amanda stood immovable. She could not come nearer; her limbs were leaden; and a cold sweat rose all over her; her very lips and eyeballs felt icy cold.

One of the men, sitting on the bed, had a basin of water on his lap; he was dipping a sponge into it now and again. Amanda gave one look at the sponge, and drew her breath in like lightning and shivered.

The poor white-trash is not an excitable race; it is slow, indolent. The experiences of life as civilization means life are so new to the forest-born that their attitude is one of startled surprise, timidity, and expectation. They are children at a show. Prepared for any anomaly, they take their shocks and their griefs calmly.

The young spinner was talking in a broken voice full of tears:

"Th' boss suttinly will fetch the doctah soon's he kin. Ih reckon he'll be hyar naow. Pore little Milly—pore little thing!"

Cinny Jones stood at the bed-foot, her arms folded across her chest, her face drawn into a hard, violent expression; she was angry with the world. Her breast heaved beneath her arms. Motherhood—its semblance—was stirred in her at last, and she bent on her child a look of fierce affection.

"What's hurt Milly?"

Amanda's voice came to them like a spirit's. They startled to see her standing in the door, her face scarcely less livid than the child's.

"Speeder," said the man with the sponge. "Ketched her haynde."

Cinny Jones met the slowly advancing figure with an

oath. She seized Amanda's arm, and snatched her forward. Here was something on which she could vent her emotion—error, self-reproach which the maternal feeling evoked in her for the first time.

"What's hurt her?" she said between her teeth. "Et's you-all! Et's your evil eye done et! Go! git out o' hyar—aout o' my chile's way fo' I kill yo' alive! Et's them damned letters yo' learned her. She was a-sayin' on 'em, 'n' her haynde got ketched. Yo' filled her hayde with foolin's, so's she couldn't tend to her work."

Now Amanda could see the bed and its pitiful burden—the puny face under its filth, chalk-like as death, the closed eyes sunken deep, the mouth drawn with a spasm of pain that penetrated even to unconsciousness. They had wrapped her in the sheets; she was swathed in white—a white that was crimsoning fast.

Amanda gave a low moan like an animal that follows after its wounded kind, slipped from Cinny's hysterical grasp to the floor, as unconscious as Milly.

Mercilessly she was spared the experience of the next few hours. When she came to herself after a long spell of trembling and weeping she was clinging to Gerkins, who held her as if she had been his own child. In answer to her questions, he told her the bare truth which no glossing could soften for Milly Jones. The doctor had come—he had done what he could. Reckoned she'd pull through—children is hyard to kill—but Milly would go out into the struggle with but one hand, to help her for the rest of her toiling days.

Chapter XII

IF Mrs. Grismore passed for a reserved woman, it was because she kept under cover the intensity of a nature she knew herself to have but imperfectly in control. Her impulses, should she give them rein, were strong enough to shatter her life; she realized this, yet morbidly felt herself a victim of Fate, and that she must give way to her impulses to the end.

For a little more than ten years she had been the unhappy wife of Jacob Grismore, unhappy from the first months of her marriage, when she had discovered certain moral biases in the character of her husband. The daughter of a rich New England cotton broker, Eleanor Morgan had scarcely finished her education, prolonged by college courses and foreign travel, when Mr. Grismore crossed a horizon all clear in reality, nevertheless flecked with the mirages youth, ambition, unrest and inexperience create. She was too intense a temperament, too sincerely feminine, to be satisfied with the routine of women's clubs and intellectual sterile interests, which, like baits temptingly hung to a modern rod, threaten to land the little maiden-fish high and dry forever on the shores of spinsterdom. She longed to live—experience and regard life from the standpoint of her own hearth. In her home's environment she was bitterly discontented. Her father had married for the second time a woman as young as his daughter, and to Eleanor Morgan's nature the friction between herself and her stepmother was intolerable.

She was so fortunate as to have inherited from her mother, and was rich in her own right. She travelled for several years, then considered—never the possibility of undertaking some professional career that would dis-

solve her from family relations, or even of running an independent establishment, but of marrying, and at once.

One night, on the heels of a day of ennui and bickerings, her father brought a friend unexpectedly for dinner. The daughter of the house, who took no part in the conversation, which was purely upon business, watched the guest with a suddenly awakened interest. He impressed and charmed her; he had a strong individuality; he spoke with authority, and well; he was masterful—that which Americans are not with women; the girl felt his power. At this time Grismore was running mills in Massachusetts, and as he talked of his affairs with the broker, displayed a keen, intelligent knowledge of the commercial and manufacturing face of the times. In reality, Grismore was financially hard up at this period, and devoutly looked to Mr. Morgan's help in the furtherance of his schemes. During the evening chance willed, or the girl so arranged, that he should have a *tête-à-tête* conversation with her. This handsome brunette, with much self-possession and poise, informed him that she was an independent woman of means—that to invest in just such a financial venture as Grismore described would interest her! She offered quite frankly to buy a block of his stock. . . . His surprise was great, his curiosity and ever quick interest in the eternal feminine aroused.

Within three months Jacob Grismore had married Miss Morgan for her money and her spirit, and she had fallen in love with him. . . . To afterwards discover that his morals were those a woman, such as she was, must loathe was her doom, and in her unhappiness she withdrew from the world and concealed her grief even from her husband. Her dignity and demeanour demanded that Grismore should be at his best with her, and he sincerely tried to control the habit which reduced him to a level so far below her own. He drank steadily, and as she yearly discovered in his dealings with men the spirit of marked greed and cruelty, she thanked God they were childless. Her fortune was large, and her income (over

which she alone had control, her capital not at her disposal until death) she freely devoted to the furthering of her husband's interests. He was successful, and when the tide turned toward the South as a good speculation in the eyes of New England mill men, Mrs. Grismore consented to go to Rextington to live. There in South Carolina she was to see for the first in her life a mill—to see for the first the human material potent factor in the coining of wealth.

Mrs. Grismore had never been in the Crompton Mills. She had fallen into the habit of obeying her husband; he distinctly objected to her coming into contact with his employés, and she had respected his wish. He said he did not care "to have her brush her skirts against a dirty mill-hand," and she put away the beneficent schemes she was constantly evolving for the betterment of the labourer; she found them to be incompatible with her husband's *modus operandi*.

Mr. Grismore had been North for a month on a protracted business trip, and in these periods of desertion his wife sank into a sort of apathetic melancholy which threatened to wreck her health. She had found the South uncongenial, she did not understand or affiliate with its people. Her Northern modern sympathies were antagonistic to the environment. Day after day saw her a prisoner within the four walls of her really beautiful home, her books, her music, her thoughts, as her sole companions. One day in sheer desperation she determined to follow her desire, and go through Crompton. The distant towers against the sky had long lured her, and more strongly still did the remembrance of the creatures whom she had seen driven as cattle to the shambles tempt her to a nearer knowledge of her husband's slaves.

She dismissed her carriage at a little distance from the buildings, and started forward on her tour of investigation. She felt timid and excited, and despite the fact that she was assured of a most courteous reception, she wished she had not come alone. The front of Crompton was inhospitable. "No entrance" met her eyes, and she

went around through the thick red sand to the side, and mounted a flight of wooden steps between the railway-trestles and the mills. Here a door opened invitingly, and out from it rushed a volume of sound, a mixed rattle and clamour, thoroughly mechanical, and in which a human note would be lost.

Mrs. Grismore entered by way of the bale-room. Before her the space was lined with oblong masses of burlaps, iron-bound. Here and there through holes in the brown sacking the milk-white body of the cotton gleamed. Clustered in groups or lying outstretched on the greasy floor, dark with refuse and dirt, lay the negroes who haul the bales from the cars to the mills. These creatures, as if conscious of the enmity toward them in the village, skulked out of sight in the corners, trying to efface their sombre figures. One giant African huddled close to the wall held in his hands a piece of salt pork; he was sucking it.

The visitor hurried by with a shudder, scarcely casting a glance at the other human shadows who filled her with pity and fear. Her dress, chosen with a special reference to this visit because of its simplicity, began to reveal itself out of all keeping with the surroundings as she lifted the spotless skirts high above the filth under her feet. She crossed the building toward a door, opened and closed it behind her quickly to definitely shut away one part of the mill. But she stopped, bewildered at the bedlam which greeted her. She was in the weave-room, and it was so vast she could scarcely have recognized her best friend at the other end. The looms, all in operation, stretching in level rows, clanged, clashed, and pounded out their eternal repeated history. To her unaccustomed ears there was no monotony in this dreadful noise. She was fresh to its impressions, and the clamour, as the shuttles tore their way through the warp, took shape in words not all incomprehensible to the manufacturer's wife. She heard in them the conglomerate voice of the mill, and she chose to think that it spoke to her.

Looking up at the unusual sight of a lady in the mills, Bachman recognized at once Mrs. Grismore, as she stood bewildered in the doorway, not knowing whither to turn to escape from the dreadful din of the machines. The appearance of the young man who came briskly toward her was a relief; in his clean calico shirt and well-kept clothes he was an agreeable contrast to the creatures around him. He greeted his employer's wife with much politeness; and his keen eyes observed the expression of her face; indeed, the Yankee's affable, common-sense attitude said as plainly as words:

"Don't waste sentiment here! The mills represent progress; of course, necessary evils are at hand here; as in all institutions. They will disappear. We *are* Progress! We represent Education, Advancement—Civilization. . . . And if you look about, and these beneficent things do not at first seem to have comprised the Cotton-Spinner in their embrace, it is solely because he is not ready for them . . . he is himself a factor creating a future perfection in which his distant descendants shall partake."

Above the bedlam of the looms she cried in his ears:

"I have come to *see* the mills; but it is so deafening . . . that I am only conscious of the sense of hearing. . . . *I can't see* anything! Is it all so dreadfully loud?" She shuddered. "What a nightmare! What an atmosphere! How do they breathe? How do they keep their senses? They grow deaf, I am sure." She covered her ears.

"Oh, they're used to it!" he consoled her. "They don't mind."

"Indeed!" Her tone was ironical. "I am sorry to think it can be. To be used to such life, fourteen hours of it, and not mind it. It's too degraded to contemplate!"

The overseer, as they started to ascend the staircase *en route* to the upper floors, endeavoured to soften her evidently exaggerated impression, and to interest her in the progress of the manufacture.

Mrs. Grismore's attention was caught by the figure of a child crouching close to the wall in order to get its filth and rags as far as possible out of the way of the "boss" and the lady. The deformed, bent-over object carried a tin pail on its arm; its other hand and arm were bound close to its side by a dirty bandage. Thus trussed and with timid curiosity, and something like fear, it lifted its wasted face to the extraordinary apparition of a "lady."

Mrs. Grismore paused on her way.

"Stop, my child."

The little thing did so with evident fright and reluctance.

"What's your name, little girl? Speak to me. Tell me your name."

"Milly."

"Milly? What else? Tell me."

"Ih dunno."

"Come," said Bachman sharply, "you're not a fool, are you? Don't you know your name?"

But Mrs. Grismore interrupted him with authority.

"Let me speak to her, please. Stand back; you frighten her. I have never seen a sight like this . . . never." She murmured it under her breath, and bent gently.

"What is your name?"

The animal-like, hunted look faded a little out of the unchildlike eyes; she whispered:

"Milly Jones."

"How old are you?"

"Seven years ole."

"Ah! Heaven!" . . . Mrs. Grismore touched the hand that grasped the pail.

"What is the matter with your other little hand, Milly?"

It was impossible to resist that caressing tone.

"Spinnin'," replied the captive.

"I understand. . . . You have hurt it. . . . Is it a bad hurt?"

Bachman was nervous. He coughed, and moved forward toward them.

"It's off," replied the child calmly.

Mrs. Grismore gave a cry, and recoiled.

So that filthy rag close to the sunken body of the child concealed the stump of an arm only! She controlled the moisture that veiled her eyes, controlled her voice, and said:

"Can you tell me, dear, how this happened?"

Milly had recounted her story often, and she began in her high child voice:

"Ih ust to spin onto the night-shift. This hyar night Ih wuz suttinly right tyard, 'n' Ih felled to sleep standin' up. Ih done felled forwards, 'n' my hand got ketched. . . ."

"Have you got a mother?"

"Yes, mam."

Here Bachman did interrupt.

"A selfish one, too. She's to blame for this."

Mrs. Grismore opened her purse, folded up a bill, and put it in the hand that held the pail. She gave a long look, whose tenderness seemed to pierce the little savage's heart, and said:

"Go, my child; I will see you again."

But she never did.

Just what ardent, far-reaching schemes she planned as she followed the boss upstairs to the spool-room Crompton was never directly to know or benefit by in her name. Her heart was profoundly touched and moved, her judgment rendering scanty verdict against the inhuman greed this sight represented. She determined to put a lever under the rock of oppression that should roll it off the face of this part of the industrial world. In a manner quite different from her intentions, she succeeded.

Before her opened the spool-room, in those earlier days long and low, running the length of the mill. Through the windows the Southern sunshine poured; on its beams rode and floated the motes of cotton ever rising from the

unhealthy floors. In front of the frames about fifty women and children walked unceasingly to and fro, whilst agile hands grasped the fly-spools unerringly, clutched them, holding for a second in the palms the power of the mill.

The spoolers—miserable, untidy, frouzy-headed, dirty-faced—were, nevertheless, the most decent of the operatives, for here the air was best, the work cleanest and lightest.

Bachman, wishing to divert Mrs. Grismore's thoughts from the spectacle of Milly Jones, paused at one spooling frame.

"Now, there's a smart little girl, Mrs. Grismore."

The spooler he indicated appeared to be about twelve years old; strong, vigorous, she stood well on her bare, dirty legs. She gave an impertinent look at the overseer, and went stolidly on with her work.

"She makes forty cents a day; never loses an hour. She's a prize hand, strong as a boy."

Mrs. Grismore considered the girl. The lines of her face were heavy and sullen, her thick lips blackened with the use of snuff, the powerful little hands grasping the flying spools indicated to the reader of humanity distinct capabilities for strong good and evil. She was formed; the rounding hips, the well-filled chest, revealed her already a woman. She would not bend, the sturdy little branch, and it would take years to break her.

"How long has she been at the work?"

"Only a few months. Her mother's a widow; works in the near room; there are five children, all in the mill."

This was home—the American household whose welfare portends so much in the making of the State and nation. The manufacturer's wife read many signs in the dark form. Brooding under these dogged, lowering brows that might corrode to discontent and anarchy an overshadowed, stunted intellect that might generate brutality—the voluptuous form which should breed desire when no morals could act as rein. Might not the little creature fiercely snatching at her spools be snatched by

Fate from this horror? . . . Was she not a force as absolute, more immortal than the power of steam which for a second's space her muscular hand controlled?

So thinking, inclined to pause, yearning to act in some measure here as Fate, burning to proclaim a complete emancipation, Mrs. Grismore paused irresolute. A fellow-overseer summoned Bachman across the room, and he excused himself for a second, leaving his guest to look about her alone.

In the centre of the room was a pile of bales, and outstretched, her head against the pillow the kindly cotton made, was a young girl asleep.

Turned up to whomsoever might pause to remark was an oval face, where under the closed eyes indigo lines had drawn themselves so intensely that a little deeper would mean abrasion. Over the low brow clung a mass of short copper-coloured hair; her nostrils were pinched, her lips drawn in against her teeth. Below the cuffs of her dress her wrists came forth painfully emaciated, and the clasped hands and claw-like nails were so dirty as to awaken actual disgust. Mrs. Grismore bent and touched the sleeper, but it required more than a touch to arouse a girl who until then had not slept for twenty-four hours. She shook her gently, until the large eyes disclosed themselves, the lids lifting unwilling, as though protesting against this cruel call to life.

"You are sick."

The cotton-spinner drew herself up painfully. She put her thin hands to her eyes as if to shield them from the sudden light.

"I'm tyard."

Mrs. Grismore bent low to her.

"I see you are. But you are ill, too."

"No," faltered the faint voice, "Ih ain't sick much; ben workin' tew long, Ih reckon."

It seemed to her as she spoke that she had worked for ever! It was her natural state, and in this inertia she felt a lifeless machine.

"What is your name?"

" 'Manda Henchley."

" Where do you work? "

Amanda looked about her, the room danced to her over-wrought senses.

" Dunno."

A faint smile came to the corners of her mouth, from which life had not taken the charm; with such a smile Cally Griscom used to say, "'Manda would fetch the byrds off'n th' trees." It was a flame animating her pallor. Why should she smile? God knew! Perhaps she was to dream again . . . to resume some vision from which this voice had called her. She made a feeble gesture with her hand, and sank back on the cotton bales.

The lips of the woman who looked at this martyr were trembling; her eyes brimmed with tears. She rose abruptly to see the little twelve-year-old child who had left her spools kneel down by Amanda.

" Look a-hyar," she called affectionately. "'Manda!"

" You know her? "

" Snakes!" muttered the child. " Reckon Ih does! She's the bes' gyrl Ih ever see; she's jest done wo'ked twenty-four hours 'thout stoppin'."

" *Twenty-four hours!*" The woman's voice was expressive. " Why, pray? "

" Miss Jones' little gyrl lost her haynd; she was to the night-shif', 'n' her maw's a bad woman. She hunted her back to the mill 'fore she could stan', 'n' 'Manda, she tried to make up Milly's time."

Here Bachman came over to them with some water. Mrs. Grismore dipped her handkerchief in it and bathed the girl's face, but the stupor of exhaustion was now beyond such gentle means.

Mrs. Grismore challenged her husband's servant with no gentleness in her tone; it was sharp and accusing, as were her flashing dark eyes.

" What do you know of this girl? "

" Why, she's just a spooler, ma'am!" he said easily, as though this classification relieved him and the world of any further responsibility.

"Who are her friends—her family?"

"She's alone—boards to the hotel."

"You mean to say she has no one to look after her?"

She had Bachman, who was only too eager to do so, but he kept this information to himself.

"No, ma'am," he said cheerfully, "not unless this little girl here wants to knock off to go home with her."

"Ih suttinly will," said the child eagerly.

But the Wheel of Fate, cogged so long at tragic and dangerous chance, began to move for Amanda. Mrs. Grismore pointed to her.

"Lift her up and carry her downstairs," she ordered the overseer.

Stunned at the command, Bachman took up the bundle of rags and dirt that Amanda was, and with what dignity he could carried her through the room. Every woman and child fastened eyes on the procession. The bare-footed, tangle-haired girl watched them longest of all. They crossed the threshold, Bachman and his burden, the lady tall and awe-inspiring. Thus Amanda passed out of the mill, and the other girl returned to her spools.

Chapter XIII

OLD Grandmaw Henchley's idea of heaven had been deliciously suited to simple conceptions, and a place certain to appeal to human nature in general.

"Et's a po'ful pretty place whar you-all gits yo' deserts, ef yo' ben good. Them ez hes ben po'ful good gits more 'n' thayre deserts, 'n' the bayde folks don't git nothin' 'tall, I reckon."

And again:

"Et's a po'ful pretty place whar yo' sets round with the folks yo' likes bes', 'n' nobody don't grab 'em from yo' . . . 'n' et ain't no sin to set with 'em . . . !"

This especial bit of her grandmother's description had been Amanda's ideal Paradise since she had known Euston . . . only she was familiar, too, with the simple story:

"Et's a pretty place whar yo' rests a heap . . . 'n' thayre's pretty smells all round."

This was the heaven into which she had come.

She was at rest. In the air round her were "po'ful pretty" smells, and she lay upon clouds—seemed to sink into them cool and soft; they soothed her limbs—her hands felt brand-new; her very being seemed washed, cooled, caressed.

"Amanda!"

At the sound of her name, pronounced by a voice still a continuation of the rest and caressing, she opened her eyes.

By her side stood a human being, not an angel, although in Amanda's case perhaps she might well have been so called. But the lady was only one object in a room full of dazzling things demanding wondering scrutiny.

"You mustn't be frightened, Amanda, to wake up in a strange house. You were so tired at the mill!"

"Reckon Ih was *so*," the girl murmured. "Ih was broke. . . ."

"Poor child . . . poor child!" The music of the voice was such that it made the stranger feel as though her eyes must fill with tears. "Can you sit up? There, I will put my hands behind your head. . . . I have something for you to drink."

Amanda did as she was bid, and drained the beverage.

"Tastes queer!" She made a little grimace.

"Milk and whisky," explained the lady.

"Why," said the girl, with a little smile, "you-all spiles tew good things, thataway; Ih was raised to take whisky *straight*."

She lay back, and quietly folded her hands on the quilt.

"When Ih come tew Ih reckoned Ih was dayde 'n' *thisher* was heaven."

The lady sat down beside her on the bed, and between hers took one of the frail hands.

"You are at my house. I have brought you to rest here."

The girl's eyes, clear and innocent, regarded her unknown benefactress with curiosity which her politeness would not express at once.

"Ih dew think et's mighty pretty of you-all," she said softly, "'n' the haouse—et's mighty pretty tew. . . . What's that to the chimney-piece?"

There were many objects "to the chimney-piece."

"Them rayde things bobbin' top o' the green."

"You don't mean *roses*, Amanda. Those are roses." The girl nodded.

"Yes, ma'm, I hyard 'bout 'em; rade 'bout 'em tew, but these 's the first *live ones* I ever see."

In spite of its vulgarity, her speech was agreeable, the voice sweetly cradled her words, and her mouth was so charming in form and expression that Mrs. Grismore watched it, fascinated. She rose.

"Lie still now and rest, my child, and don't think about anything."

She brought one of the roses and put it in her guest's hands.

Amanda touched it reverently, and as its delicate perfume came to her she raised it to her face with visible delight; her own colour began to come back under her wan cheeks.

"My!" she exclaimed, "how it senses to yo' hands, jest ez pretty ez et smells!" and ventured to ask a question that had puzzled her ever since she had opened her eyes. "Could you-all tale me what's that onto the walls?"

"Paper, Amanda"; and seeing this conveyed no meaning, Mrs. Grismore explained: "Flowers painted on paper, and then pasted on the walls."

"Et suttinly dew fit good," complimented the little barbarian.

Amanda had been with Mrs. Grismore only two days when she had thus awakened. Beside the natural sleep of exhaustion and stupor, she had been made to sleep still longer under the stimulus of food and medicine. But now, restored to the possession of her normal powers, the excitement and wonder of her experience would not let her lie still. So she got up and found herself before a long looking-glass, in which she saw herself reflected in the white night-dress, spotless, of a stuff so fine that it seemed like the clouds; she resembled a spirit even to herself.

"Ih suttinly dew look like Ih wuz dayde 'n' come to life," she said with Biblical paradox, and with more subtle truth than she knew.

Where was she? Whither had she come, and how? She went to the window, and her eyes were dazzled by the sunlight through which she looked down into a garden of green lawns and trees and a fountain; it was all as strange as a new world to a discoverer who runs his keel upon the shores of an enchanted island.

She turned bewildered to search for her clothes.

Nothing resembling the old garments of the hills and the mills met her eyes. The chrysalis had opened and set free this little creature whose flight in time to come would be perilously near the flame! Amanda was troubled. She began to feel her weak limbs tremble, and she sought to escape. Putting her hand on the knob of the door between her room and the next, she opened it. There was the lovely woman again, whose voice alone could soothe and explain this mystery!

Mrs. Grismore rose quickly from her chair and came to Amanda. She realized at once that the mill girl's mind must be set at rest. Taking her hands tenderly and thus drawing her back into the bedroom, she said:

"Sit down here on your bed, Amanda. Listen to what I want to say to you, my child. You are not strong enough to work in the mills . . ." Whether or not Mrs. Grismore knew of any task for which the frail piece of humanity appeared fit, she did not propose or suggest it. It was not new labour that the benefactress had in mind. "Who is there in Crompton who has a right over you? I have asked . . ." Mrs. Grismore chose her words tactfully. "But I can't find that anyone seems to claim you. . . ."

The lips of the cotton-spinner trembled, but she controlled the weakness; she was brave.

"Thay're ain't reg'larly a soul to Crompton what owns me," she said, and lifted her beautiful eyes with their confession of homeless waifdom in them to Mrs. Grismore. The extreme pathos of this toiling creature, so soft, so helpless, and so young, had already spoken intensely to Mrs. Grismore's empty heart. Her hands tightening over Amanda's, she said:

"I would like to take you, my child. . . . I have no one, no child; I would like to do what I can to make you forget your past, to make you happy."

Amanda did not measure the extent of this wide sweep of fortune. She asked in a hushed undertone, as though she needed some introduction to this moulder of her fate:

"What's you-all's naime?"

"I am Mrs. Grismore."

Ah . . . how the little creature snatched her hands away! She sprang like a hurt thing from the woman's side, to which she had almost clung. In her dilating eyes, her tightening lips, how plainly Mrs. Grismore read the epitome of hate and fear!

"Let me get out o' hyar," she gasped. "You-all ain't got no call to keep me!"

She would have flown all undressed as she was out of the room, but Mrs. Grismore was before her.

"Wait, Amanda, please. I understand . . . You hate that name."

The figure of the girl, half child, half woman, stood rigid before her; the breast heaved, passion and fire and spirit animated what had been a languid little form.

"Ih ain't in his haouse, am Ih? He ain't hyar?"

"No—no!" soothed Mrs. Grismore to both questions, her soul sickening at the feelings her husband's name evoked.

"It ain't that I'm '*fraid o' him*," explained the captive, "but I suttinly won't tech his money. Why, don't you-all know what et's made of?" She lowered her voice, already soft. "Et's made out 'n we-all—Milly Jones 'n' me 'n' Upton's Jeannie. Et jest *rinched* out o' us. Look at me!"

She extended her meagre arms, but had no need to command Mrs. Grismore to consider her emaciated body. Mrs. Grismore would never forget it as long as her soul's eyes could recall the tragedies of life. With an exclamation of sympathy and motherhood that Amanda quivered to hear, she encircled her, and fairly carried her back to the bed. Then she bent over the shaking, excited girl, soothing, appealing, saying:

"Amanda, you do not know . . . or understand!"

It was not his money, but Mrs. Grismore's own that should care for her, clothe her, protect her. Amanda listened with hunted, uneasy eyes, that softened at last underneath a shower of love which wonderfully lulled

her. She grew calm, and in extreme weakness lay back in Mrs. Grismore's arms. Before she had promised anything or even understood what her altered life portended, she had wept a little, been soothed, and for the first time in her orphaned, starved history, as one whom his mother comforteth, she fell asleep on a tender breast.

That night at four o'clock, the usual early hour when the brutal voice of the mills stirs its captives to rise at the breaking of day, she awoke with a start and cry and sat up in bed, dazed in the stillness that at this early hour envelopes all things not doomed to serfdom. From far away came the summons of the Ralings Mills; it penetrated the film of Amanda's slumber. Sitting bolt upright, her hands against her heart, she listened until the whistle, like an exhausted cry, subsided into silence. At the thought that in some village whose name she did not even know a like call was arousing Euston to his day's toil, her eyes filled with tears. A great outgoing of her little heart to him shook her so that she trembled like a leaf. Pale and careworn, his face came before her eyes, and she wanted him with that all-powerful desire that will make a woman go to the world's end for the man she loves, and be unconscious of sacrifice or of anything but the absorption of the impelling force. As this emotion stirred, she realized that the change in her life would further separate her from him; the fear that she might be prevented from ever seeing him again made her cold.

She sprang up out of bed, and unconscious of what she meant to do or of where she meant to go, she put on the woollen wrapper and the slippers at her bedside, and stole from the room and out into the corridor slowly filling with the gray morning.

Chapter XIV

AN act of beneficence is not always immediately followed by measure pressed down and running over poured into the human bosom. Mrs. Grismore, her soul expanding with generous sentiment and the joy at Amanda's presence, and salvation creating something akin to happiness, closed the door of the room where her new treasure slept, and turned towards her husband's study to make ready a parcel of papers for the post in obedience to a despatch received that day.

A man's study—his workshop—is an indication of himself, and Grismore's library was an accurate inanimate expression of his tastes. His wife disliked the room. Here it was, since they had come South, she usually talked with her husband, discussed with him, and here he invariably conquered. Here, one by one, she had abandoned her philanthropic schemes; here, one by one, seen the illusions of her life crumble to ashes. The room was uncongenial in arrangement and furnishings; the bookshelves contained scant food for her cultured and literary tastes. Works on cotton-growing, cotton-ginning; treatises on manufacturing interests in every country in the world; a few stray volumes on economics and labour questions, written notably by capitalists; a good supply of the novels of the moment, books bought haphazard at railway and news stands as Mr. Grismore made his frequent journeys hither and thither.

With a glance more critical and antipathetic than usual at the lining of the shelves, Mrs. Grismore seated herself at the desk before her husband's papers, prepared to readdress his mail, and to find the contracts he had designated.

There is a fact trite and self-evident, but none the less worthy of acknowledgment, that the miseries and wrongs

of which we are unconscious will never make us suffer! Around the individual life of many of us may lie the woof of tragedy, the garment of dishonour, but so long as this is mercifully invisible we can be part of the appalling condition and yet remain at peace. The hand that rests on the latch of the secret closet may well pause before the knob, too fatally turned, reveals what must inevitably condemn happiness forever from the household.

Mrs. Grismore, not finding what she sought in the first drawers of the secretary, opened them all, one after another. The last contained a wooden lid secured by a safety lock. She had never seen this drawer before. The papers might lie here; at all events, she pushed the lid with little idea that it would slide, but on this day there was nothing between herself and the unknown.

The business documents were not there, but instead was a small packet of letters—one of those packets that instantly suggest sentiment even to the most prosaic eyes—a pile of enveloped correspondence addressed in a woman's hand and tied together with a ribbon. There was also—as, after a second's hesitation, she lifted up the little bundle—a bunch of photographs and a long envelope underneath; this was the last object in the secret drawer, and she knew this documentary envelope was not what her husband had expected her to find.

Impelled, however, by the inevitable hand of Fate, as little to be resisted as the force of the machines that had maimed the body of the child she had pitied, Mrs. Grismore, her cheeks warming with a sense of shame, her pulses quickening with a sense of danger, untied the photographs; there were three of them.

One was of a young and handsome man with a strong, intelligent face, rather too full lips, rather too masterful brows—a face expressing a self-indulgence, an egoism too likely to engender brutality.

She had no such picture of her husband as this. It was a *carte-de-visite* of the sixties. He could not have been over twenty-one years old.

The second photograph was of a young girl, a sweet, pretty creature, with smooth hair parted either side, an appealing face; around her throat above her simple dress was a black velvet ribbon.

There was a third picture, and on the yellow paste-board the silhouette-like impression of those days of earlier photography designed itself faintly. The photograph was very faded, the colour of a withered leaf. The same woman older, more nearly beautiful, with deeper appeal in her eyes and an intense sadness in her face; she held close to her breast, its little head close to hers, an infant.

Mrs. Grismore turned the picture slowly over. On the back she read in the same handwriting as the letters, "Elizabeth Penryn and her child, 18—."

She put the photographs down, and drew the document out of its long envelope. She read it several times, as if its purport, gross as it was, stultifying as it was, could only be grasped after long study; and the spirit of Age which had followed her with Shame and Despair into the library touched her lineaments as she read. Before she took up the letters, which she read one by one, she had grown old.

When she had ended with the little pile of letters she carefully, methodically, gathered them all together with the long document (not the one her husband had sent for!) and the photographs, and sealed, stamped, and addressed the parcel to Mr. Grismore. Then she got up and went out of the library. The long lines of shelves, with their commercial statistics, their insensate records of values, gains, and agricultural progress, were the sole witnesses of the tragedy, so quietly and profoundly enacted in an hour's time.

It requires so short a space to accomplish the deeds whose finite result is perhaps never attained! "Pleasure is an hour and Sorrow is a year," the Spaniard says, and who is there to put a limit to the Sea of Consequences, or to draw the shore-line for the devouring, ever-mounting tide?

On her way along the corridor, Amanda passed a half-opened door from behind which the light filtered out into the hall, but behind it was also the sound of weeping—a long-drawn, convulsive sobbing, a shaking, uncontrolled tempest of grief which evidently was beyond control.

Past such heart-breaking sorrow Amanda's sympathy would not let her go indifferently. Mrs. Grismore had already won her love, and only the dread of losing Euston for ever could have tempted her to this disloyal flight. She hesitated a moment, then pushed the door wide open, and went into a bedroom in disorder. Clothes were scattered hither and thither on chairs and on the floor, drawers were opened and emptied, trunks stood strapped. The scene suggested hasty preparations for a hasty departure, but all the confusion meant nothing to Amanda, who scarcely saw it. On a sofa, thrown her full length, her head buried in her hands, was the lovely woman who had soothed her to sleep like a mother, and from whom she was ungratefully trying to escape.

Mrs. Grismore was weeping aloud with that abandon of a soul which, believing itself alone and safe in the night's solitude, dares to give grief its stormy way. Whilst her scalding tears, which for hours past had burned her cheeks and seared her eyelids, still fell, she felt a touch on her shoulder. If it had been the hand of the dead woman whose face had haunted her passionate thoughts all night, she could not have sprung more quickly from the couch.

But before her stood only the little mill girl, her eyes like stars.

Mrs. Grismore drew a long, shuddering breath. She had forgotten Amanda's existence. As though she had not perceived the girl, she covered her disfigured face with her hands again, and sat bowed over in silent despair. Amanda had never been confronted with sorrow like to this; its cause she could not dimly imagine, but her breast swelling with sympathy, she put her arms around the woman's neck, and laid her cheek against her hands without a word.

Mrs. Grismore was hardly conscious of her, but after a little she became sensible of the human touch close to her body; against her hands the cheek of Amanda grew warm and moist, as the sensitive little creature mingled her ready tears with hers. Mrs. Grismore, with a deep sigh, moved, disengaged herself, and revealed a face so changed that Amanda would not have known it. She said with difficulty:

"It is morning! Day again—a new day—to begin a new life . . . *My God!*" She spoke to herself, but aloud. Then, with a supreme effort at self-possession and control, "I had forgotten you, my child; I have forgotten everything but my grief. How did you come to me here? Why?"

Now recalling her desire for freedom, the girl said truthfully: "Ih wuz suttinly goin away, but Ih hyard you-all cryin' . . ."

"*Away!*" exclaimed Mrs. Grismore. "I am going away myself at once from Rexington. In two hours I shall be on the way to New York. I have taken you out of your life, my poor child, and I am taking myself out of mine. . . ." She paused, her eyes trying to see through their blinding veil of tears the young girl before her. The contemplation of another's anguish, combined with her own knowledge of life, had imparted a serious beauty to the young face as it was raised to Mrs. Grismore. The older woman's heart, bereft, yearned toward this human, visibly touched comforter. She made an expressive gesture.

"I can't explain to you, Amanda—it is too great and terrible to explain, you are too young—but my life is ruined, my heart is broken; the name of Grismore you hate, so I hate more deeply than you can. I am going away to another country. I shall never see the South again. . . . As you see me, my child, I shall be forever—lonely, wretched. I have no one—no one in the world."

Amanda stood patiently listening, her face a lovely mirror to sympathetically reflect the other's sorrow.

"Come with me. I want you—I need you; I can give you everything in the world of comfort, education. I need you—Amanda!"

So stubbornly set upon her one great treasure (never hers, yet still apparently part of her life) was this mill girl that even this touching appeal could not sever her from Euston . . . but as Mrs. Grismore talked—nay, before her short flight from her bed to the door—the realization of the truth had bitterly come to Amanda. What was she to Henry Euston? Nothing! He was her sister's husband, jealously kept; he belonged to Lily Bud, and she was deserted, cast away, forgotten. A sob shook her, and in a trembling voice she asked from this unknown, one who in a gentle way would enslave her anew, a guerdon of freedom in case Love ever made a way for its course:

"Supposin' I want to come back hyar—some day—kin I come?"

"Yes, yes," readily promised Mrs. Grismore; "but forget whoever you think may need you now, Amanda, and come to me."

With a gesture of desolate appeal, she opened her arms, and Amanda went to them.

Chapter XV.

ANNALS of lives such as Henry Euston's during his first year at Ireton are not edifying. To touch briefly on the main points is sufficient.

He turned with Lily Bud into a shanty no different to the hundred others, and went to work in the weaving-room of the old mill. Of the five hundred hands employed, he became the best operative. His work consisted of fourteen hours a day labour, broken by half an hour at noon. The average wage earned by a first-class weaver caused him to smile contemptuously. He looked the looms over, rolled his sleeves well up on his arms, bent his melancholy face over his machine, and in two weeks' time surpassed the power of production hitherto supposed to be possible in the Ireton Mills. Euston's "boss" observed him, and offered him an overseership. The weaver at his loom shook his head.

"I can't; I drink," he said simply.

"Oh, give that up. Come!" advised the overseer, who liked him.

Euston set his crank; click, click it went at the swiftest vibration. He raised his eyebrows, and looked at his superintendent.

"Why?"

"Why? Because it is a low-down habit! It's killing you."

And the hearer, scrutinizing the fabric he was weaving to see that no thread ran astray, murmured:

"It might do worse."

Drink did not kill him; he was not born to fail, as are many branded dwarfs of Circumstance, no more than

jokes made by Fate, humorous attempts to abortion exhibited in the lives of certain human beings.

Only a mechanical work which, once mastered, repeated itself, and required no individual or creative thought, could have been possible for a man in the state of Euston. He wove to perfection. Under his slender, clever fingers the cloth came out clean as snow, flawless. So should have been his own life, because of his gifts. He had them. He was created to do absolutely well whatever task he set himself to perform, always given that *he wished to do it*. He *wished* to live as he was living in Ireton. Nothing stimulated or stirred him beyond the indulgence of a habit long formed. Over and over again he said to himself, "I have inherited, I cannot break it; and if I did break it, what then?" As there was no one to answer this question put to the spirits of the air, he went on drinking.

His dissipation in no wise interfered with his work. Once his looms before him his head cleared, and, although he was not an intelligent companion to the men around him, his lips scarlet, his eyes bleared, still he was a first-rate weaver. He made the highest wages of any man in the mills, and since he was there to weave, he wove; whether drunk or sober had nothing to do with the case. Degradation of months of drunkenness became his; the knowledge that almost every cent he made he spent on self-indulgence was a painful fact when now and again he opened his feverish eyes on realities. The sodden condition of his mind, the animalism of his nature, developed to a point he never supposed a man with a soul could attain. Contact and companionship with the vapid-minded woman to whom he had linked his outcast state, this intercourse, slight as it was, helped him along his too easily followed course to ruin. At all events, he dragged her down as he fell, and lower than himself. The woman's nature had nothing to counterbalance its miserable tendencies. Certain human beings, in whatever length they go, seem never to sully the wings of the spirit; there are others, who in a life of decent morality

possess no spirit's wings to soil. Lily Bud Euston was a slug crawling in the veriest mire around the stone—that stone, her fate. Her condition Euston should one day see, and it should shame him. It should come to him late, this knowledge, when Revelation is still too true a light not to illumine an obscure path. Revelation?

The hour Henry Euston regenerated he did so with magnificence. A broadcast pardoning of his own offenses was what he permitted himself, and took the motto, "Behold, all things are made new!" To his shameful past he never referred more than was absolutely needful; when in a crisis he could thereby help a struggling soul—he had been a bat fitting in the odorous horrors of a deadly swamp—he became an eagle, and in his sun-directed flights he dazzled himself with the fixity of his gaze on the disc of light, and he was blind to everything but his goal.

During this period Lily Bud was a lady indeed! She obeyed her husband, to begin with, although he had never spoken to her in a harsh tone. He did not wish her to work. All day she rocked in a rocker in the boarding-house kitchen, eating candy or chewing gum, or, most constantly "dipping." She had grown fat, dumpy, and unpleasant. Her youth slipped from her month by month, like a garment limp and unlovely that hangs on a peg with no body to fill its shape; youth and beauty withered; nothing in this shrivelled character sustained its form.

She had learned one lesson at least—that of silence. Powerless to influence her husband, she knew she could not make him stop drinking, and they never talked together. In appearance she differed not a whit from the spinners and spoolers and weavers whose work Euston chose her to disdain. She wore cotton wrappers, never clean; all the week her hair was done in hard crimps round her head, and, in spite of the fact that her husband forbade her to earn money, he had nothing over and above their living with which to buy her finery. She chafed at this, and after awhile, as she grew stronger in health,

she began stealthily and cleverly to look about in order to find some means by which she might procure for herself the gewgaws her soul loved.

As Euston, despite his infirmity, managed to inspire affection in the people around him, Lily Bud could not pursue her affairs under the eyes of the boarding-house keeper. She made acquaintances, however, in the next mill village, which was not far away, and there managed to amuse herself. At night, however, she was always on the piazza to greet her husband as he came slowly up the wooden steps, his head bowed, his hands thrust in his pockets, the soft felt hat pulled over his brow. Beneath it, long and black, his hair hung over his forehead, a shadow around his sullen, morose face.

One night in July, when the thermometer was above the hundred mark, Mrs. Euston was surprised to see her husband return sober. He ate his supper with a certain relish, and at table actually engaged in conversation with the other occupants of the house, instead of, as was his custom, going upstairs and falling into a sleep not broken until morning. With these boarding-house companions Euston that night talked wages and labour, and broached subjects Lily Bud had never heard agitated in her life before. After supper, profiting by this extraordinary occasion, his wife said to him:

"Ain't you-all satisfied with Ireton Mill?"

He did not reply. His eyes were fixed on the scene before him. Separated from them by a sandy road, the line of low-browed, one-story houses, nothing more than hovels, raised themselves on stilts from a malarious soil. Panes of glass shone in the windows, and in this alone they differed from the far-famed cabins of the backwoods. The crudeness of the scene struck him as never before.

The village swarmed with creatures now free from the mills. In the intense heat everybody was out of doors; some hung from the windows, some even lay outstretched by the side of their hovels on the ground. There was

little sound; only the shrill bark of a dog here and there, for these people were too tired to talk, and no one laughed. At the foot of the street, tireless although inanimate, singularly alive with a vitality not its own (as though it stole and monopolized the fibre of others), the mill roared and clicked. In a few moments the hands on the night-shift left the groups around the houses, and slouched, reluctantly millward, past where Lily Bud and Euston stood on their shanty steps. Her mouth was stained with snuff. She twisted her dip from side to side.

"Ain't you-all sat'sfied with Ireton?"

At the repetition Euston looked up at his wife. It is not too much to say that he actually saw her for the first time in months. His vision, cleared by sobriety, permitted him to take in the dirty slouch she was. A sense of shame filled him, and dislike none the less keen, as he realized—*honour bound him here!*

"Take that out of your mouth!" His tone, the sharpest she had ever heard from him, made her start. "Never let me see you take snuff again—or dip. . . ."

"Ef that ain't suttinly *mean!* Yo'-all hev your pleasures, Ih reckon; Ih'd a heap ruther go to spoolin' 'n set hyar, ef Ih cayn't dip."

He observed her as she talked, wondering more at himself than at her.

"How old are you?"

"Me? Why, Ih suttinly reckon Ih'm 'bout twenty-one." Delighted to get a word with him, she pursued: "Ih suttinly *would* like a change. Ih'm sick ez death o' Ireton Mills. You cayn't reckon haow Ih *den* hate to set alone hyar all day!"

He concealed his rising disgust. She sidled up to him, and put her dirty hand on his arm.

"Cayn't Ih hev a few nickles, Henry?"

"If you will go and get a pitcher of hot water, wash yourself, and take those things out of your hair, and make yourself as clean as you can, you can go with them on the excursion to-morrow."

She gave a cry of joy and utter amazement.

"Henry! Why, you-all suttinly is kynd 'n' pretty tew me now."

He wanted to get her out of his sight, be free of her. He shook her hand away.

"All right; go upstairs."

A young boy about fifteen years old, fellow-boarder with the Eustons, now came out of the house past Euston. He was thin as a needle; long, light hair, scarcely differing in hue from his sallow, lifeless face, fell on his neck and about his ears.

"Working on the night-shift, Fred?"

The boy's eyes were bleared with illness; he coughed before he replied, his narrow shoulders shaking under his ragged coat.

"Yaas, suh, Ih suttinly am."

"Better knock off to-night."

"Ih suttinly hev to go," he replied. "The overseer to my room, he-all sayde if Ih lost any mo' time Ih'd hev tew leave th' mills. Whar'd Ih go to?" He questioned Euston with a gentle smile.

"How much do you make?"

"Thirty-five cents a night."

One of his sleeves hung loose from the shoulder; he waved it, a pitiful flag. He cast upon Euston a look half humorous.

"This hyar ain't good for mo' 'n ten cents! Ih grabs ma broom with th' stump when Ih sweeps the flo's!"

A fit of coughing seized him; he struggled with it in vain, and so racked, hung to the piazza-rail till he was quieter.

Then he said, "Good-even' to you-all," and slipped past Euston into the hot street toward the mill, there to work till broad morning.

Over the visage of the man gazing after the slight figure of the martyr a transformation had passed. The veil, dark and sinister, so long drawn from brow to chin, obscuring the soul, began to raise. Hands of Mercy, hands of Pity, hands of Love, were lifting it.

Upstairs he could hear Lily Bud humming a song as

she went about the decent task he had commanded. The air of one of Falloner's songs came down to him:

"Oh, show me a little whar Ih'll fin' a rose."

While he so stood musing and alone, here and there from out the different shanties struggled forth half a dozen men. They reached the road without speaking to one another, and slouched along, as if aimlessly, toward the woods at the mill village's end; but their intent was common. Against the fence-rail Euston knocked the ashes of his pipe, put it in his pocket, and as though he had expected to see this group pass at this hour, went down the shanty steps, and followed them through the town to the remotest edge of the settlement. Here they had paused. Before them lay the forest, black and cool; behind them, in the confines of the pest-breeding village, all the accumulated wretchedness of their toiling existences. It was a festering wound; as much of them as had normal flesh and blood as yet uneaten away rebelled and cried out for relief. The men were not different in aspect to the apathetic brothers who, unwilling to "join" or remonstrate with conditions, had been left in their shanties or before their looms. But in these men's eyes was a brightness, an eagerness on their faces; they were the first whisper, the first portent of the labour dissensions in the South of the United States. Their confab was low, not even hurried; it was gentle, too, in its soft drawl. No part of their argument in speech, one man with his hands in his pockets, felt hat pulled over his brow, stood a little distance from them, not even apparently listening; his eyes were on the ground. Finally the voice of one weaver rose a bit above the undertone:

"We-all suttinly do hev to hev a hayde—somebody tew kinder lead us."

There was a slight acquiescence, and at once, as question of leadership arose, the group fell a little apart. There was a silence, then a man—it was Falloner—said:

"Henry Euston."

The isolated figure started a trifle at these words. A murmur, whether of dissent or approval he could not hear, ran from man to man of the mill hands, and another opposed: "He dew drink so po'ful bayde. . . !"

Too low, too cast away, too degraded, to stand for this miserable fringe of humanity! The words smote him like whips of flame; his cheeks blazed, and he came directly forward. Taking his hat off, he bared his head and raised it, and with the action his stature straightened, appeared taller, and possessed of new dignity.

"I am glad my name came to your mind," he said, his voice so altered that his comrades scarcely knew it. "What I have done to deserve that you should name me, God knows! But, in spite of my beastlike habit, you must have felt something of how my heart, and soul, and mind have been stirred for you." With one simple sentence, he put himself out of their category, thus above and beyond them; it was a masterpiece of intelligence! "Perhaps I am not fit to lead you—to be the brain of you, the heart of you, the strength of you. It is for you to say; but if you will give me this chance, I will prove to be not unworthy of it." He put out his hand. . . . "I mean . . . I will never drink again whilst I live!"

Book III
The Greater Bondage

Chapter I

IN the drawing-room car of a South-bound train there were, on this afternoon, but two passengers. One of them, close to the window of her seat, kept her attention pertinaciously fixed on the landscape with a fidelity the monotonous character of the flying scene without did not warrant—not at least, in the opinion of her fellow-traveller.

He had so steadily considered her whilst she was ignorant of his gaze that she had curiously grown to seem not a stranger to him, but almost familiar. After following for the twentieth time the clear line of her cheek until it lost its contour in the sweep of her neck; after he had to his satisfaction decided that he had never seen such hair, such colouring, such breathing charm before; after an unconscionable period in which she had given him no sight of her full face nor her eyes, he felt that he knew her, had a right to speak to her, which, not being in the least the case, he was forced to sit at a stupid distance, and wish for an insignificant accident which, if it did not throw her into his protection, would at least be an excuse for a word. Quiet, self-absorbed, and to his taste, and as far as he could judge of her profile and figure, perfectly beautiful, she studied the Southern States with maddening fidelity.

No one can fall in love with a profile. It may be charming, suggestive, but it is also elusive and unmagnetic. The cameo bas-relief of a mistress will never inspire the lover to deeds of glory; it must leave him cold. In the eyes, in the fire of the face, if it has such, lit by the full, free exchange of look, lies the dynamic power which constitutes the fatality of the human visage.

After a long time, when he had duly admired this woman's bearing, followed boldly the generous moulding of her form under a close-fitting black cloth dress heavy with crepe, the tapering of her forearm to the wrist, the negligent pose of her hand in its black suede glove, it is probable that he would have risen and in sheer desperation retired to the smoking compartment, taking care to return slowly and catch what glimpse he without rudeness could of the lady. He was saved this diplomacy. There came a slight crash and bump to the forward of the train. They both lurched a little; the car came to a standstill, and the lady turned her full face to her admirer.

"What can be the matter?"

This he at once volunteered to discover, and went quickly out of the car, to be followed by her as far as the door of the vestibule. When he returned he found his travelling companion tranquilly waiting in her seat, her hands folded in her lap. She raised to him fully as much of good looks as he had imagined her possessed of, and the expression of inquiring trust that a woman so delightfully and flatteringly bestows on the other sex in times of danger, or when accurate information is required. It was in this case only the latter. He was able to insure her that the matter was slight—a hot box; it would not delay them more than two hours.

"Two hours!" she exclaimed with impatience. "How annoying! We are already four hours late! . . . We can't be in Rexington before midnight!"

Her impatience was not flattering, but then, she had not been absorbed in him for hours. He ventured to take the seat in front of her.

"You can telegraph at the next station, but Rexington will know that our train is delayed."

Mr. Ireton felt his enjoyment of her must be **circum-**spect.

"It is a beautiful country," she vouchsafed, after a second; but this he could heartily contradict, and it gave

him an excuse for throwing a warm interest into his tone :

"I can't agree with you. I think it is arid, monotonous; but perhaps it is because I make the trip a dozen times a year. Anything would be tame under such circumstances."

"You know it well, then?"

"It has a great future."

She pointed to the forests just without the window, miles upon miles of superb pines.

" . . . A lumbering country?"

"A great deal of the wood *is* shipped," he returned, "to all parts of the world from these States. Those little earthen dishes at the tree's base are to catch resin; and Georgia pines make the best masts to the Norway trees."

"And what is their *first* quality?" she asked, smiling. "To predict a great future for a country is to suppose it has something of the best in the world. . . ."

"Yes—cotton, the best in the world."

Mr. Ireton decided that the traveller was a cosmopolitan. She was probably a European *en route* to visit her relatives in the South. He would not have been surprised to hear her speak French; her clothes, her hand-luggage, were all markedly foreign, and he could not remember having seen, out of France, such a well-dressed head as this under the *crêpe* toque. She had removed her veil, and he could take all the pleasure he would in her hair, dark brown, with burnished ends of copper-red. He ventured to ask:

"This is your first trip South?"

She said only "Yes," but the note, not sufficiently forbidding, failed in baffling Ireton.

He wanted to say, "Who are you? You are the most lovely woman I have ever seen! I want to know you—to know your name, at least, or where you are going, that you will let me see you again." Instead he said:

"The progress of the Southern States in the last ten years is absolutely marvellous. In 1900 there were only

thirty-six cotton mills in . . . , and to-day there are . . . This gives an idea of the pace the South can keep when started."

He thought that her attitude extended him the privilege of entertaining her if he could. He succeeded, and sketched a little history of the growth of the cotton industries during the past decade.

"You talk well of it," she flattered him as he paused, "and as though you loved the very plant."

"I suppose I ought to. I am a cotton manufacturer . . . a mill-owner."

Here, as though she gave him permission to be such, she inclined her head, and with a perceptible coldness in her voice, said "Ah!" in a pretty intonation.

Ireton, at once chilled, concluded that she had a worldly prejudice against trade; he coloured slightly, and in some embarrassment the stranger here spoke:

"I have read something of these Southern mills and villages. It seems to me, I remember the book said there was hardship—and suffering."

Mr. Ireton replied: "Oh, those reports are shockingly exaggerated! A few fanatics take up these questions, and set the working people and the sentimentalists by the ears. The poor spinners are far worse off, discontented and planning strikes, than when they are quietly making their living. You must not believe all you hear," he counselled wisely.

"No, I can promise that I will believe only what I see," said his companion quietly.

Mr. Ireton, forgetting his rôle of indifferent stranger, marvelled at her loveliness. Her lips seemed at first to him cut out of red ivory, smoothed until no grain appeared; then he found them scarlet red, like fresh berries folded over snow. Her skin, dazzling in fairness, was fine as the inside of a shell.

"If you are only to be impressed by what you see," he said aloud, "we manufacturers are perfectly safe from your too sympathetic criticism; for unless you insist that some one should show you a model mill, you will

not be likely to run around the mill towns of South Carolina!"

"Ah, then there are model mills?"

And he exclaimed: "Lots of them! If I may be so conceited, mine is one."

"I am glad to hear it."

"It is about fifty miles from Rexington. I have my own railroad, and no one comes into town or goes out of it without my knowledge and permission."

At this point the conductor came through the car, and took in at a glance his sole passengers, to whom the long wait in the midst of the Georgia forests had not been unpleasing.

"We are getting right along now," he encouraged, nodding to Mr. Ireton. "They'll be putting on the dining car at Bulgrave, and we'll make up lost time."

Mr. Ireton's *vis-à-vis* was a woman who had passed the first of youth. If the rubicon of twenty-five is the limit, she was beyond it. She might be twenty-five or thirty. Above eyes, gray in some lights, dark in others, ran the fine line of her delicate brows that, when she talked, remained tranquil. Her face, serious, thoughtful, was almost sad in repose, but no sooner did she animate than it changed like a sun-touched pool into light ripples and quick flashes; her smile transfigured her—transient, as all beauty should be—exquisitely humorous, subtle and comprehending. It was the face of a woman whose knowledge of life is first-hand; whose silence is a cover for experience; whose speech itself is not always a key to her thoughts, certainly not to her secrets. She was mysterious, he found—a baffling charm in her tone—her gestures, her unexpected pauses when he longed to hear her go on for ever, her little laugh—so sweet a sound! no sooner well begun than ceased . . . bird-note too soon subdued.

The landscape, once more slowly moving, developed new interests, and, as, indeed, he was actually planning a forced retreat, she turned unexpectedly. She had evi-

dently not been thinking of the scene without or of him. In her full, delicious voice she said:

"The book I read—I won't give you the details; I will spare your natural prejudices—this book showed me the industry you speak of with such warmth and genuine enthusiasm—in a different light. It spoke of little children spinning at machines for fourteen hours a day—children . . . (if I remember rightly, it was an old book) . . . children only six years old. There was much more too sad, too degraded to repeat. Are these things exaggerated . . . or have the conditions changed?"

What a remarkable face! rendered more brilliant, even, by the emotion sweeping it! Collecting his thoughts, he replied:

"Oh, of course—of course the conditions you mention are changed! In some of the States laws have been passed forbidding all child labour under ten years of age. Certainly in *my* mill such horrors never have been and never will be. . . . The hands only work twelve hours a day in my mill, and I don't believe there is a child under ten."

"*Only twelve hours!*" she murmured. "Then they have cut off *two hours in twelve years?* Twelve hours a day to labour! Why, it's half one's life, isn't it?"

Her tone was scarcely audible; she did not seem to be speaking to him. Mr. Ireton had never thought as much about his mills, or as deeply, as he did in this space of time under the spell of this thrilling voice. The enterprise was a legitimate, honourable means of adding to his already large fortune—certainly an easy means; he had been known to say that to start a cotton-mill in the South was "like rolling a snowball down a hill of new-fallen snow": the sphere gained in lightning proportion. Being a gentleman, and not a brutal one, he had instituted certain reforms in his district. He had put decent overseers over his hands. He had built as good houses as he knew how, and apart from this, he exacted the same sum of labour as did his colleagues and his competitors

all throughout his State. Whether it were only the personality of the woman in his presence, or some latent current of human pity she had been the means of setting free, true it is that as she said, "*Twelve hours! Why, it is half one's life!*" the idea struck him rather forcibly.

"You see," he deprecated, "a tender-hearted woman judges these things from a sentimental standpoint. Not that sentiment isn't *right*, but it ought not to be wasted. Everything in this world should be judged by comparison."

His *vis-à-vis* now gave him her attention. She had drawn off the glove of her right hand—a finely-made hand, small, with slender, pointed fingers, each nail an exquisite oval.

He observed her with deepening pleasure, and continued:

"You cannot, of course, remotely imagine what the condition of those mill hands is before we take them into our mills! . . . They come of a race of primitive people; their habits are as primitive as are the habits of certain barbarians, I believe. They haven't any religion, although they have a lot of superstitions, and all sorts of queer stories are current about their rites of marriage and burial. They are a low-lived, ignorant tribe. In some of the regions they huddle together in shanties not fit to be called houses. I almost wish you could see one of those cabins, to give you an idea! Just fancy, a whole family—eighteen people—sleeping in one room, *on the floor* or on sacking or on pine boughs! Some of them do have beds. Now, contrast that life with one in a clean, pretty house in a civilized part of the country, with every chance to become decent, law-abiding citizens. Why, these people would remain brutes, penniless, semi-civilized creatures if it was not for commerce and the civilization of labour!"

He looked toward the lovely, intelligent face for some sign of comprehension, and saw there an expression which made him go on to say:

"The things I picture are unpleasant for you to hear; I can see it! You will excuse me; I ought not to be so frank; a stranger cannot even grasp it."

"On the contrary," she assured him, "I think I have never heard anything more interesting. I can picture what you tell me. . . . You really think there is a great difference between these backwoods people—and the rest of Americans . . . ?"

He answered without hesitating: "I consider them a distinct race; with splendid qualities, of course—honest, industrious, and with actual racial possibilities; but there are *generations* between them and civilization."

"Ah . . . !" She repeated her soft exclamation again reflectively. "It is very interesting."

Mr. Ireton now leaned forward earnestly.

"Believe me . . . the very kindest thing that can be done is to leave them alone. Let them rationally progress in the same ratio that all the manufacturing world has progressed. . . ."

"In twelve more years," she interrupted, "perhaps you will reduce their day's labour to ten hours!"

He shook his head leniently at her obstinacy.

"The very worst thing for them to know at present is that there is anything better than they have."

"Oh!" she exclaimed sharply. "To know there is anything better and to want it! Why, isn't that one of the first signs of civilization?"

He was thoroughly accustomed to the twentieth-century woman with her fads and hobbies, her intellectual and philanthropic interest which takes her beyond the modest pale of hearth and household. He knew lovely, clever women whose ambition it was to cast a vote, to jostle their husbands in professions they could never fill; but he talked for the first time to a woman who attacked the conditions of his beloved mills.

She was too feminine, too charming to be an agitator. In the silence that fell between them she ventured to look at him in safety for the first time, for, curiously enough, he had for a moment removed his admiring eyes from

her; he was bent forward thinking intently about what she had said and suggested. He was the type of ordinary, well-bred, well-thinking, keen American—vigorous, matter-of-fact, capable and successful. She had only time to decide that he pleased her before she spoke.

“My mills are the Ireton mills. . . they are fifty miles from Rexington. I have my own railroad—indeed, it is quite a little kingdom; and, in spite of your prejudices, I think if you could see them you would do me the justice to say I rule as well as I can. . . .”

Chapter II

THE traveller, whose name her admiring companion had not been able to discover, descended alone from the train at Rextington.

At the sidewalk a group of ragged negro cabmen, frantically clutching the air with black, outstretched hands, hailed each advancing passenger:

“Hyar, boss! hyar, boss!”

Alongside of these wretched wagons were smarter busses from the various hotels, and toward one such vehicle the traveller made her way. She got in, and was straightway rattled off, over the cobbles, through the pitch-dark streets to a pretentious hostelry known as the Rextington.

The early morning saw her dressed and at her window, which overlooked the whole of the little city. The town's expanse, bordered by the wide valleys of the surrounding country—arid, unbeautiful, through which a dark river took its sluggish way—lay before her eyes, bathed in the sunshine. Far on the horizon, separated from the city and its interests, she could see a cluster of buildings in the open fields. The group represented the enormous Southern enterprise known as the Grismore Mills. At the side of the hotel itself rose brick structures stained and grimy. They appeared to be lifeless. It must either be very early, or the hours of labour very late, for the mills by this time should be merrily at work! These, she remembered perfectly, were the Ralings Mills. She had seen them before but once in her life, when on a memorable day she had wandered through this pigmy city side by side with a ragged man just freed from gaol! . . . There had been a spinner

in the Ralings Mills, years ago, who called himself—*Dex Falloner!* As she said the name, she smiled—a whimsical smile, as though she knew much of life and things and people, and would “believe only what she saw”! The interview with Mr. Ireton had amused and interested her. She liked him—he was a fine type of his race—but she could not think of him now. Her watch marked six o’clock. She would not waken her maid; she wanted to be alone and free. She rang for her breakfast, and to the great surprise of the coloured waiter ordered it served in her room. She also wanted the papers of the day before. The name of Rexington in print, seen for the first time, the look of the papers, gave her a singular sensation. *Rexington!* It *was* a real place, then! . . . peopled by real creatures, not figments of vision; and among these real individuals who moved and had beings, where was the one whose image had filled her dreams in times gone by—and since . . . ?

On opening the *Sentinel*, she read:

“One thousand hands have struck at Ralings Mills. It is generally understood that this strike is the last achievement of a certain fanatical leader. It is also rumoured that unless this man either ceases his instigations or leaves Rexington, the town will make it extremely uncomfortable for him. The gentlemen of Rexington and hereabouts, especially Mr. G., it is well understood, have endured about as much of this man’s insolence and ignorant partisanship as is possible. The meetings at the Barracks appear to have demonstrated how stupidly blind the cotton-spinners can be. We use the word ‘blind’ when we speak of labourers. Their leader we call criminal.”

After she had read the papers to her satisfaction, the stranger put on her hat and coat, and went out of the hotel into the streets. She was one of few astir, and looked curiously about as though she were trying to

reconstitute for herself the setting of scenes in a remembered past. From this new hotel ran the main street to the town. At its head the public buildings—white wooden structures, colonial in character—shone clean, fresh and vivid in the early morning. The trolley-line marked the centre of the avenue, and as the lady stood irresolute and in something of a maze, the first trolley of the day came slowly and swingingly along. On its side she read the words "Crompton Mills," and with no further hesitation she motioned to the grip-man; the car came to a standstill, and she boarded it, to the surprise of the conductor, who looked at the fashionable young woman with both admiration and suspicion. She was the only occupant of the car, and it whizzed and hummed with her out of Rexington to the mill district. From the moment the city was left behind the mills were distinctly evident on the landscape. Peering from the window, she saw them rise shadowlike—stupendous, sombre mountains of labour. Smaller shadows, more formless and less distinct, were the clustering mill-houses.

No one could describe the feelings in the breast of the single passenger, who sat with mantling cheeks and eyes suffused by an emotion that made her heart beat fast. She seemed surrounded by shadows, phantoms whose strained, work-worn faces smiled at her, knew her, recognized her. She felt the near proximity of life and realities as never before, and with all she was sensible of being most utterly alone—set apart, forgotten, and more desolate than ever in her life. And she was asking herself why had she come? to what purpose? in hopes to see what scenes, and to see whom? The car-conductor, whose curiosity was at boiling-point, said to her:

"You-all ain't got on the wrong cyar, ma'am? This one goes to the mills."

"I am going to the mills," she replied; and he was forced to believe her and wonder.

At Crompton stores she descended. The row of bright brick buildings was new to her—all was new to her. Old Crompton, the venerable pioneer of South Carolina mills,

with its scenes, its griefs, its tragedies, had vanished, blotted from the face of the earth. A sickening realization of the years—their flight, their destruction—came over her. Crompton was changed, but not so much as she. . . . As she looked across the desert waste of yellow sand to the new mill village, she felt like a ghost revisiting its earthly tenement. Not until this moment did she appreciate how irretrievably far she had gone, into how completely another being Mrs. Morgan (who had assumed her maiden name after leaving Mr. Grismore) had transformed her. In the harsh light that this morning cast over the scene, the picture-like illusions centred in one figure in her past began to fade—towers of ashes, smitten by a blow. The weaver in his cotton-flecked coat, the pale drunkard stumbling up the steps of his shanty—what could he be to her now?

She had left a villa on the Lake of Como, where for months she had been with a few friends. After Mrs. Morgan's death, irresistibly summoned, singularly impelled, she had come back to America. She would fulfil her errand and return to Italy.

The keeper of the supply stores was astir; he, too, regarded her curiously as she stepped off the trolley and on to the sidewalk, and stood for a few moments undecided, looking to this side and that. Giant-like the new Crompton uprose before her, five hundred windows flashing from its immutable face; against them the red light of the morning threw its crimson. Two splendid towers divided the building in the centre, bastion-like, dungeon-like; suggestive of a mighty prison, it dominated the plain.

This mill was astir! Across the arid, treeless waste its voice came, clicking, calling, summoning. It was full of human life, gorged to its summit with sacrifice. As she looked, a hard expression settled round the corners of her beautiful mouth. Mr. Ireton would never have recognized the insouciant, attractive face if he could have seen it then. As though she had taken a sudden decision, she started forward to traverse the vacant space between her-

self and Crompton, and here the storekeeper, who had been watching her, left his position in the open door of his shop, and at the first sign she made of withdrawing from his interested gaze he came up and lifted his hat.

"Miss Worts, I reckon? Why, Mr. Ware's ben lookin' fer you, ma'am."

As he spoke, he nodded in the direction of a church.

The stranger had not yet remarked this innovation in her intense absorption. She saw, as he pointed, a pretty stone chapel with a cross on its spire, and close to it a small house, likewise of stone. Here, then, Creed, Faith, and Doctrine were at last represented to the toilers of Crompton! Here was a solution, perhaps, to her problem. She would see the minister, discover from him all she wanted to learn, leave money—a large sum—with him, and shake the cotton and dust of the South from her forever.

She thanked the storekeeper, and as she left him directed her steps towards the church.

Her ring at the bell of the little house was answered by none other than the minister himself. He drew back in great embarrassment at being thus caught by a visitor in the deshable of an early morning toilet. He did all his own housework, and the poor fellow had scarcely washed his face, and had not even brushed his hair. It stood up bright and golden round the pale, intelligent face of the celibate High Churchman.

"I beg ten thousands pardons!" He threw the door open. "Won't you come in?"

And she followed him into a little room which served as study, parlour, library, and sanctum.

"Miss Worts, I suppose? I am glad to see you. I scarcely hoped you would get here after all, for your letter last night quite disheartened me."

"I am not Miss Worts," said his guest. "I am a stranger passing through Crompton, and I have a great curiosity to see the mills; and I also want to ask a few questions about the labourers, if you have the time to spare."

Chapter III

JACOB GRISMORE'S history during the twelve years that had elapsed since his wife left him had been unqualifiedly successful. The company he represented, the largest south of the Mason and Dixon line, comprised as well mills in Lowell and Lawrence; its prestige and profits pushed its rivals hard. Crompton's stockholders had reason to rub their hands with content. Crompton paid twelve per cent., and it was rumoured, and hushed, and whispered again, that there were mills whose glorious dividends went beyond the twenty per cents. There was no stock on the market, and Grismore himself was the largest holder. Under his hand labour was plentiful, and each year saw wider fields extending themselves to the commodity which South Carolina generously enabled him to deliver to the public demand. Crompton looms sent their fabric into Russia, where the nitre-mine slaves work in the humid dark, into China, where the coolie women are brutalized. To those creatures went cotton cloth spun by the hands of women and children working day and night, another race of slaves, in another land, whose very emblem is Liberty!

Grismore's success imparted to him a self-satisfaction, an air of importance, just short of pomposity. He had grown more corpulent, to his disgust, for he was vain of his figure and appearance; he showed his age little, nevertheless, and, save a slight tendency to baldness, there was no indication how late into the fifties he had lived. He was a very unhappy man, when he had time to acknowledge it, but his care was not concrete, and the lines in his brow were those bitterness had drawn. The shock and chagrin of his wife's flight, the knowledge of how utterly she must despise him, were the greatest

humiliations he had endured. He wrote to her once—several times; his letters were returned to him unopened. He never knew her whereabouts; she completely eluded him, and after five years of actual suffering and grief he abandoned the search and her memory as far as he could, and readjusted his life. Regarding the girl she had taken with her he made no inquiries; the fact that one of the mill-hands had become his wife's companion and he was shut out perhaps bruised him to a peculiarly successful degree. No one volunteered to Jacob Grismore any information he did not seek, and he was ignorant even of the spinner's name. Money had ever been a god to him; the pursuit of it had all the excitement of a chase, a battle, and he absorbed himself in the amassing of wealth, a hard, unfeeling employer, an egoist to his fingers' ends, an implacable enemy.

One afternoon in the early winter of 190- word was brought him that a lady had called to see him.

He gave a few minutes' finishing touches to a toilet already carefully made, and went downstairs to the drawing-room. There rose as he entered a woman in deep mourning, so lovely as to summon to his surprised thoughts all the past emotions of his life. A faint odour of delicious perfume filled the air of the room. The visitor did not extend her hand to him. She bowed very coldly, and said in a musical voice, with a slight foreign accent:

"I am Mrs. Morgan's adopted daughter, Mr. Grismore. I have come at her wish . . . to see you . . . to tell you of her all you care to know."

The human being who is nearing the close of life and who knows it, is likely to have a passionate desire to live several lives in the few remaining days. Mrs. Grismore's intense and generous nature was fired, to the last, with a desire to leave what good results behind she could of a career broken and destroyed. Her directions to the messenger had been minute and ardent. What there was of regret and remorse and pain . . . Amanda was to soothe if she could. What there was of good in that perverted

character . . . the emissary was to arouse as she might. Just what Amanda had thought to see in the man whose name was the ogre of her past, the detestation of her present, she could not have told. Her beloved friend had given her a path of thorns to tread in this expiatory journey and deed.

Before her the man, whom she astonished and took by surprise, paled under his florid complexion. Rebellion awoke in him at his impotence to call to life the years whose passing had taken youth and pleasure from him and made him in the eyes of his wife and this woman a hated thing. He searched in vain for something to say, and fell naturally upon his soul-corroding obsession.

"Sit down, won't you?" He motioned to a sofa by the window. "My wife left a considerable fortune, an income of something like forty thousand a year . . ."

The visitor blushed painfully red.

"The letters I have, the papers, will inform you that Mrs. Grismore made me her heir . . ."

And thus the conversation opened between Mr. Grismore and a former spinner in his mills.

With the sentiment strong in her that she must completely fulfil her friend's wishes to her utmost power, Amanda accepted Mr. Grismore's invitation to visit at his home. The woman with her was a companion and servant, a faithful French creature to whom Mrs. Morgan had entrusted the care of the young girl immediately upon their arrival in Europe. Thus slightly matronized, she took up her abode reluctantly in the Grismore mansion for a presumably short time.

She was given the same room in which she had awakened after leaving the mill, Mrs. Grismore's study opening off it was unchanged, and once again introduced into scenes which, although never familiar, had been indelibly impressed upon her mind, she found that she remembered every detail.

She had gone out of this house with a stranger, she came back to it to find everything recalling Mrs. Gris-

more, a summoner of the loyalest, gentlest memories a loving heart could hold.

Unusual in the case of these feminine enterprises, where a barren woman seeks by the introduction of another's child into her heart to find consolation, this had been successful. Never for a moment was the adoption of Amanda regretted by the woman who had taken her on the most unguarded impulse. She watched the development of the girl with keen delight and astonishment. She became hourly more beautiful. Care and nourishment, change of scene, luxury, did wonders for the growing body and physique of the descendant of some of the oldest races of the world. She grew tall and supple and rounded, her movements slow and full of suave indolence that imparted to her every gesture and motion fascination and charm. Her native wit made her a sparkling companion, education exercised her keen intelligence and refined her qualities, already of unusual order.

Mrs. Grismore found her the best teachers France and England could supply. They travelled all over the Continent, and when Amanda's education came to its end, Mrs. Morgan, it must be confessed with no great warmth, suggested marriage to her adopted daughter. Amanda was lukewarm, and, although her opportunities were many, she remained until Mrs. Morgan's death heart-whole, and apparently with but one thought in the world—her adopted mother. No better companion for a dawning intellect, for a mind avid for food and apt to learn, could have been chosen than this well-educated, clear-minded woman, in whom the natural sources of joy and love, cruelly dammed, left the channel free for the spiritual and intellectual development. She turned to Amanda with an intensity almost tragic, as if determined to filch from life, in this object, the satisfaction everything else had failed to give. It was as though Fate said to her: "If through these channels you are willing to receive indemnity for your bankrupt score . . . here is a certain wealth for you!" And, as far as she could,

Amanda made her benefactress rich. Graceful and gracious, she was adoringly grateful as well. She called her "mother," and soothed the ache of disappointed maternity. She clung to the older woman with warm, devoted arms, and brought tears of joy to Mrs. Morgan's eyes.

One exhibition of her character had greatly astonished Mrs. Morgan on the day they embarked from New York. Amanda pressed to her side as the ship left port.

"We suttinly ain't goin' to see Rexington fer a spell?"

"Never again, please heaven!"

Amanda had a fashion of laying her hand unexpectedly on Mrs. Morgan's, and, although her grasp was not strong, it instantly claimed close attention.

"You-all suttinly will dew sumpin' fer me?"

"If I can, Amanda."

"Don't never speak to me 'bout *et* . . ." she stammered. "Never say nothin' to me 'bout the mill . . . nor them thayre."

If by some miracle the young girl could have seen the bleeding heart of the older woman, could have known Mrs. Morgan's utter desire to blot out and to efface America and Rexington, she could not have chosen a wish or better framed her simple request.

Mrs. Morgan put her arm around her adopted child, and looked down at Amanda.

"It is a bargain," she said in a suffocated voice. "Rexington is off the map of the world for you and me."

If curiosity or interest were in Amanda's heart regarding what she had left behind her, she never gave voice to the fact.

Chapter IV

AMANDA'S interview with the pale little clergyman at the mill parsonage had been singular, in that she had asked nothing of what she expected when she crossed his threshold. No sooner was she seated in his tiny sanctum, under his near-sighted eyes that expressed natural surprise at her coming and curiosity as to who she was, than she realized her appearance on the precincts of the mill at this hour was in itself odd, and that she had acted under the excitement of the moment wherein her past associations had quite overwhelmed the present realities.

Mr. Ware, cut and dried, gentle and ceremonious, made the world resume its unsentimental aspect, and she saw that sudden inquiry into lives of people here or there would be on this morning impossible. She decided to remain incognito; he must not know, if she could keep it from him, who she was, or that she had any connection with Mrs. Grismore. No one must know it! If Henry Euston were to cross her path, she would reserve the option as to whether or not she should make herself known. And as for her sister, *that* situation she was not ready to discuss even with herself.

Amanda had been several days a guest of Mr. Grismore, a restless visitor, and yet unwilling to take the first step that should bring her face to face with certainties which must inevitably cause her emotion and pain.

To Grismore it was as if after long-continued winter a sudden spring had marvellously come. The presence of the beautiful woman, whose graceful movements were a pleasure to see, whose voice was delicious to hear, filled his desolate hours with a light it would not be easy to spare. He thought intently of her, and, able hitherto to override every obstacle between himself and his desires, he began seriously to consider her as a possible wife.

He came abruptly one evening into the little study which had been his wife's, and found Amanda before the table writing. She looked up at his rather noisy entrance; his hands were full of newspaper clippings, which he brandished before her eyes.

"To the infernal deuce with this Henry Euston!"

His pronunciation of the name constantly in her thoughts was unexpected, and his address seemed personal. She coloured violently.

Grismore continued furiously: "See what importance these idiotic reporters give to this man! Four hundred clippings have been sent me, from every paper in the United States, I should say. His last speech quoted at length. Who goes to hear him in the Barracks where he hangs out, I'd like to know? Have you heard of him?"

He questioned his guest in his excitement. Despite the fact that the antagonistic attitude of this leader was affecting him more than anything at present, and unless he could forestall their action his own "hands" would probably strike within the next few days, he had leisure to observe Amanda, and remarked her heightened colour and interest.

"I have read of the disturbances," she replied, "and I saw there was a leader; his name hasn't been mentioned. Why is that?"

"Cowardice on the part of the press down here; the papers are afraid to give him prominence. Foster Brothers of the Penvallon Mills closed their accounts out last week. Poor young Foster was about to be married; he broke his engagement, went under the bankrupt law, and last week he blew his brains out. That's the result for you of anarchy and socialism!" He nodded, passed his hand across his brow, sat down by the table, and threw the clippings in front of him. "This man Euston (he is just about half sane) has wound up his proceedings very satisfactorily at the Foster Mills. . . ."

Amanda leaned forward, and took up one of the newspaper clippings.

Mr. Grismore continued: "He brought his fanaticism

to a heat in the Foster Mills. Why, I consider this man Foster's murderer! Ten years ago, a little more or less, I understand Euston was a drunken weaver—a reprobate—kept on in the mills by charity; now he's trying to run our concerns for us . . . to overturn the reasonable laws between employer and employé. He went in disguise to the Foster Mills one day. Finding in one of the rooms children he thought too young to work, he stalked out at noon with a child in each hand, and the next day a committee of one or two half-witted mill-hands called on Foster, and informed him that unless every child was taken off the night shift the mill would be cleared. Of course, Foster resisted—refused to recognize this bedlamite, but Euston's power is so ridiculously strong amongst the hands that after a harangue or two he talked the whole weaving-room over. The mills struck; they carried on that strike four weeks—four weeks!" Grismore repeated, flattening his hand down on the table. "And God knows where they got their food from! Just see what blind sheep they are! Poor Foster held out as long as he could. His orders were coming in from the East, and he could not get man, woman or child to go to Pen-vallon. Just as he was about to cave in and grant their request, what do you think the whole seven hundred hands did? Vamoosed the district for another mill! I suppose Foster had gotten all worn out with the fight . . . at any rate, he just put a bullet through his head. . . ."

To the absorbed, attentive interest of his guest Mr. Grismore gave this most interesting information, which roused in her a dozen wonders; and she was about to question him as skilfully as she might, when his manner altered with surprising rapidity—from the irritated business man's to the personal by which he grew to be more and more possessed.

"But I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you were something of a socialist yourself?"

He smiled. It was an unusual expression for him; humour was such an unfamiliar garb for his face that it was rather embarrassing to see it than otherwise.

"I suppose you have kept all kinds of bitter memories against us here, haven't you, little girl?"

His voice was disagreeably caressing. Amanda made no reply.

"I won't recall those days, of course," he went on. "Nobody to look at you would ever suppose you were ever anything but a lady. You must have had denced good blood in you."

His address was irritating, but the news that he had unconsciously given her, the veil that he had torn from her past, impressed, shook her beyond what she had expected to feel when Henry Euston's existence should again be made known. Her heart beat fast, and her hands were cold. In her silence Grismore repeated:

"You don't, of course, remember Rexington clearly, do you?"

From the handful of clippings she had been mechanically folding together she looked up at him, as though she reluctantly considered it a personality so unpleasant and unsympathetic that it required all her control to regard it. Grismore's smile still lingered on his face.

"I remember it all." His presence, his attitude, and what he had said and implied—the facts on the black and white printed lines of the news-clippings—were tense and absorbing to her; she could scarcely breathe. "Of course I remember every detail. These people would find me changed, but I am in reality a cotton-mill hand."

He shook his head.

"Nonsense," he contradicted—"nonsense!"

In spite of herself, her expression was unfriendly as she met his eyes, and he had a sudden fear she might take violent *parti pris* for the people, through sentimentality, or, very naturally, because of her own past; although (he thought to himself) "she ought to feel just the other way, and thank heaven she's out of that muck."

"Come . . . no socialism here!" he exclaimed, with an attempt at lightness. "No sentimentality over a lot of miserable, discontented cotton-spinners. I won't

have you interesting yourself in them, or going near the mill towns. . . .”

But, as the guest sprang up from the table like lightning, he saw his mistake.

“Oh, what do you mean, to speak to me like that?” she exclaimed.

His heart fairly stood still.

“Nothing, nothing—I didn’t mean . . . I beg your pardon. You are quite free to go where you like—do what you like!” He feared he had offended her so that she would leave his house. *That* she should not do! He would control himself, overcome, keep down every feeling that could antagonize this girl with the darkening eyes and the beautiful glowing skin. She should *not* go. He would do everything in the world to keep her . . . not a few days, but forever. “I get so carried away,” he apologized, his face paling, “by certain ways and means the Union takes in the State, that it has spoiled my temper.”

She bent over the table, her hands lost among the piles of loose newspaper notices. Her eyes sparkled. She raised them and said quickly:

“I owe everything in my life to Mrs. Morgan. I adored her; I adore her memory.” (And, too sincere in the full meaning of her words to permit herself the discourtesy of telling Grismore what she thought of him, she tried to conceal her loathing.) “However I may feel regarding the labour question, for her sake I will say nothing to offend you.”

Thoroughly ashamed of himself, he came toward her, and said in as genial a tone as he knew:

“I am all upset. Poor Foster’s death has unnerved me. My affairs are not in the shape they should be. . . If Crompton goes on strike, it will mean a big loss at this time, and I can’t hope to keep the other mills from following suit. I am nervous . . .” His fingers trembled; on one of them he wore a gold seal-ring. It shone hard and yellow on his flesh. “Shake hands, little girl.” His tone was imploring. “I get awfully boorish down

here, with nothing but niggers and mills to look at. You'll have to forgive me."

The memory of the woman who had been to her like a mother spoke for Grismore, and Amanda extended her hand.

The manufacturer took it between both his, and pressed it hard. In her mourning dress she stood immobile, regarding him coldly, but with less dislike.

He murmured, "Be good to me."

Just here the negro butler pushed open the half-closed door, and said:

"Thar's a gemmen downstairs for Mr. Grismore."

"Damn him! he can't see me."

"He says it's 'bout the strikes, suh."

"What's his name?"

"Dunno."

Grismore thrust his hands in his pockets, and turned away from his guest.

"A gentleman or a mill hand?"

"Suttinly is a real gemman, suh."

"I've got to see him, I suppose," he said reluctantly and over his shoulder. "I wish it were Euston; I'd tar and feather him and send him home on a shutter."

Chapter V

WHEN Mr. Grismore entered his library a tall man came quickly forward from where he had been standing in the window.

The manufacturer could not have been summoned at a moment more unpropitious. If a plea was to be advanced, it might safely be predicted useless! Tingling from the interview with the girl he had reluctantly left, irritated at the interruption, Grismore had no Southern politeness at command with which to gloss over his bad humour. He slammed the door too hard, for (as are most things in the South) it was out of order; it sprang ajar again at once.

With a sharp gesture, he said "Well, sir?" and gave an inquiring nod to the man, who was a stranger to him.

"I am beneath your roof, if not quite under false pretences—not frankly," said the gentleman. "Your servant didn't ask my name; if I had volunteered it, I don't believe you would have seen me. On the other hand, you may be glad to do so—I am Henry Euston."

Mr. Grismore threw back his head, laughed disagreeably, and pointed his thumb out toward the door.

"When my man told me someone was here, I said that I wished to God it were you! I won't say what I promised to do; it is too sincere!"

The guest bowed, his face unclouded by the rude greeting. Grismore's tone and laugh were as distinct in what they intended to convey of insult as the words.

"Of course, you can't be friendly to me," he said quietly. "I have come to make you a proposition regarding the present state of affairs. If you don't care to hear, I will go at once."

Beyond his sneering hatred, Grismore felt a natural curiosity regarding the man. He didn't want to confess that he was glad to have a look at him, but it was a fact. For the first time he was listening to the voice which from Rextington to Mason and Dixon's line, and beyond, had held men spell-bound. Even in these commonplace words the marked individuality of the speaker was evident. Grismore was obliged to lean forward a little to hear the low, rather indistinct speech. He said curtly:

"Sit down. You are right; you *are* here under false pretences, but I dare say, it's your way. You won't get very far with your errand, however, if you expect me to tell you what I think of your codes of action!"

"No," accepted Euston, "possibly not."

Mr. Grismore sat back in a big chair, under the light of a green-shaded student's lamp. His guest was still standing.

"Well, don't sit down if you don't want to," he muttered; "I won't ask you again."

He supposed that Euston felt himself a little out of place in the sumptuous room of the cotton-mill magnate.

"Last night I sent a committee to see you, Mr. Grismore. . . ." And Grismore half sprang out of his chair.

"*A committee!*" he exclaimed, with all possible disagreeableness of tone. "Why, haven't you found out yet that there doesn't exist anything of that kind down here?"

"I thought there did," deprecated the other. "*They* thought there did! One of the fellows was a man who has been a weaver in the South for twenty years. He is an honest, sober, toiling chap, and it seems to me—as it did to him—that he should have some voice in his fate. . . . The other was an expert machinist, who has worked in four countries of the world. He drifted here to Crompton. He speaks four languages; he is intelligent; he has run the Crompton machines for five years with only one break in his time. I have thought—and others have thought—that his points of view might be not without interest. The others . . ."

Euston spoke at first very slowly, then his words gaining rapidity, the sentences developed great velocity, and ran fast one on the other until the hearer was carried along against his will. The voice of the man had been the shaking, trembling organ of a confirmed drunkard. He had controlled it that it might become the voice of the people. It was a distinct expression of his own character—a photograph of himself. Vibrant and full of feeling, its tremolo controlled, it swung finally compassionate and compelling, as at length, quite beyond his empire, it carried the hearers and himself on its tide.

The manufacturer furiously interrupted: "I don't care a —— who the others are!"

His hand lay on his knee, and against the flesh the yellow signet of his ring sank hard and metallic. Euston showed no sign of anger; he only slightly inclined his head. He was too keen not to be quite conscious that his personality irritated the man in the chair, and his control was intolerable to Grismore. The manufacturer was jealous of his power. He had supposed him to be an inferior person—a coarse weaver. He saw that he was a gentleman. If, indeed, there was any difference in class the two represented, this man had the advantage over Grismore. Natures such as Grismore's, in whom the qualities are brought into play in connection with the most material and grossest sides of life, are at their worst before a man of Euston's temper; their sole weapons are insult and injury. Grismore had no others; as for Euston he needed no weapon. His very existence was a sword to pierce the older man to his core, and it should wound him to his soul.

"If you've come here to harangue me about the agreeable characters of my mill-hands, you can spare your breath to cool your porridge! Those people are to me just so much capital, and if they don't pay the per cent. they ought to, why, it's a poor investment. And when I get out, it will be the worse for REXINGTON and for these fools too (although they wouldn't acknowledge it at the starving point!). As for your com-

mittees"—and he laughed and snapped his fingers—"why, you might as well send me half a dozen of the mules the niggers drive round here, and ask me to recognize *them!*"

In his fury he leaned forward out of his chair, but suddenly he controlled himself, unconsciously stimulated by the character of the man before him to decency.

"I have told you through the papers (and I guess I have made it pretty generally understood) that I recognize no committee of any federation or corporation whatsoever. If I know it, I will not have a Union man in my mills. Haven't you and your half-witted friends got that into your heads yet?"

Whether Euston felt that this man could not insult him, or whether years of anguish and endurance and control had rendered it possible for him to bite dust, eat dust with apparent relish, at all events he made no sign that he was not enjoying his reception.

"You have made it clear, Mr. Grismore, to my friends and me, but we do not accept it."

This was too much for Mr. Grismore.

"You don't!" he sneered. "And what are you going to do about it?"

Euston did not reply. He had no desire to goad the manufacturer to a more hideous display of temper, and he did not wish to be forced to resent the attitude of a man whom he despised. A few years ago he would probably have struck him before this. Now this fleshy mass of egoism, brutality and commercial greed aroused a feeling near to pity. The man before him was, as it were, seated on, and amidst, his money-bags. His hands were steeped in them up to his shoulders. His very blood ran gold. Euston and his colleagues held, for the present, the strings of these colossal sacks, pre-eminently those bearing the huge letters, "Southern Mill Capital." At one sign from Euston these strings could be cut, and the coin would roll out, leaving the shrivelled, sapped demi-god a skeleton man lying on his empty sacks.

"What are you going to do about it?" the other repeated, reading in Euston's silence a certain hesitation that pleased him.

"That question I cannot answer to-night." And now he accelerated his speech, and threw a little more life into it. "You have permitted me to remain in your house these few moments;-I cannot fail to see that you do not make me welcome, and I only irritate you unwillingly; therefore, let me say, as quickly as possible, what I came to say, and go. You know Mr. Foster's mills are to be sold at auction next week. Unless you buy these mills, as I hear you think of doing, they will go to a company whose heads are friendly to the Union. These friendly manufacturers are very rich, you will find, when you come to bid against them." He paused for a moment. "And I want to tell you that if you will give me your word to-night that you will recognize the committee sent to your house, the Penvallon Mills will fall under your first bid without opposition from any other party, and there will be no strike at Crompton this week or next week. I believe I can safely vouch that if you care to show this friendly feeling you will not have cause to regret it."

Grismore's face had grown white; he was tapping his gold seal-ring gently against the table.

" . . . If you refuse, however, to recognize us, and persist in your antagonism, Crompton will eventually strike, Penvallon will go to the favourable parties, and we will fill the mills with Union operatives. I need not have told you this . . . I need not have considered you. I have done so only because it seems in the course of life a terrible mistake that you, who can control so much and so well, should not work with us, instead of against us. I may close with you to-night any agreement I see fit. When I leave this house the opportunity goes with me. I render myself to my chiefs in Washington, and from their attitude I cannot believe this proposition will repeat itself."

The cotton king's eyes fairly popped out of his head.

Under them the flesh rose puffily; his fingers worked; he advanced his chin toward the speaker.

"What a damned scoundrel you are!" he said very low. "What a hateful of presumption you have got! You are nothing but a half reformed drunkard, a mill-hand yourself, well-spoken and smooth-tongued enough; you are nothing but a —— tool—a paid tool! You tell these poor wretches that you despise ME,"—he breathed hard,—“you curse me and my dealings. Why, these fools pay you out of their savings, and your chiefs pay you, and you bleed them at both ends. To-morrow you will turn them out of good work and from the gaining of honest money. You make of them lawbreakers and idlers and discontents. You are a menace,” he said—“a menace to good society. You are an exhibition of the most dangerous class our country has got.”

He paused for breath, thrust his hands in his trousers pockets, and threw out his chest. He inspired himself.

"You ought to be put in gaol. Fifty years ago, if you had talked as you do in another country, you would have been hung. Do your worst with your meeting and your corporations! I am not afraid of you. I can stand out against the lot of you, and I have half a mind to call a lockout at my mills and bring in a lot of Dagos, if it cost my last cent."

Euston was moved, but all his feelings he kept to himself, back of his deep, passionate eyes and the stern mask of his pallid face. He turned towards the door; it was wide open to the hall.

Anyone passing in the corridor could have heard the manufacturer's angry voice . . . anyone passing in the corridor . . . anyone a little way down the hall in the shadow of a staircase—standing close to the newel-post, clasping the balustrade with trembling hands—could have heard the voice that replied to this storm of vulgar and brutal excess.

"This is your answer, Mr. Grismore?"

And after another furious outbreak from the manufacturer, "Good-night."

Mr. Grismore, who had not succeeded in tearing from his guest any sign of irritation, now said:

" . . . I want you to understand that my doors are shut to you, sir; and if you care to disregard this, you do so at your own risk."

Here a drawer opened and closed. This listener at the newel-post sprang forward, but there was nothing to fear, Grismore put the pistol he had taken out of the drawer down on the table.

"Now you know what your welcome will be here."

"When I come again," Euston said, "*I shall come prepared.*"

The curtains were pushed open, and a tall man, bowed from the shoulders, came out of the room, pulled his soft hat down over his head, and went quickly out of the front-door.

After hurrying through the halls, Amanda gained her own room before her eavesdropping had been detected; she trembled so violently that consecutive thought was impossible. Then the first effect somewhat tranquilized, and the pendulum swinging more evenly, she was able to face the facts this overheard conversation had revealed; she loved to wonder, reflect, listen again in memory to that transformed voice, and contemplate what this man had become! That Henry Euston! Impossible! The pale, overworked drunkard, the ragged, expert weaver had vanished, and this man, whose word swayed thousands—whose power was a thing to dread and fear—had been born in his stead.

What was his environment? Where was his wife? Where was her sister? What pace had Lily Bud kept alongside this paragon? What was his home? He had one . . . children, perhaps. Much—everything can transpire in twelve years.

Her reflections forced a quick breath from her bosom; in a sigh as characteristic of her as her laugh it passed her lips. She was filled with conflicting feelings; admiration—marvelling admiration that, as its warmth glowed through her, showed how vital was the interest which had

traversed her life since first this man crossed her path, and jealousy that he had gone so far, accomplished so great things, distanced her, and in it she had been no factor whatsoever. The fact that he could be happy, that he could be content, displeased her. But even the probable existence of Lily Bud, and the concrete wall of a family between a possible friendship with Euston and herself, could not at this moment destroy the pleasure it had been to see him. Her nature, capable of the greatest devotion to a cause or an individual, pined to express its generous possibilities; she burned to care for, to surround with tenderness, someone who needed her. Someone? Ah! in clear, vivid image, in undeniably distinct figure, it became this one! His weakness had made her tender to him long ago; his illness had endeared him; and now, even beyond her admiration for his triumph, was a tenderness for him, a desire that he should need her.

Amanda was a lover—a woman born to waste herself, to despoil herself, to prodigally spend herself on the object adored. She could with bliss outpour at the feet of the man she loved her preciousmost treasures, and from the sacrifice have gone forth to a life of utter deprivation, and been not wholly wretched. Women capable of such adoration are never quite entirely unhappy—can never be quite destroyed. A feeling that, despite ties which might sever them, Euston might need her still came like a balm. Passion—and, above all, when its desire is illegitimate—snatches any straw which will carry it toward the vortex. She drew her chair to the window, and seated herself to continue, more at peace, her reflections.

The house at Rexington gave directly on a garden, an acre or two of lawn. In the centre of the turf was a fountain well supplied from the Bye, and Amanda now heard the rising and falling of the waters pleasantly mingling with the train of her thoughts. She had not yet realized how above everything she had longed to see this man again. She only asked herself the question,

What can I do to help this man? How can I make use of myself for him now?

Her income in his hands would be a powerful instrument of good.

To recognize Euston at this present time and frankly espouse his cause would entail her professing enmity to Mr. Grismore—an enmity hourly growing more keen. Before flying from his roof and taking up arms against him and his policies, she very naturally questioned: “Will it not do signal harm to him if I take such an emphatic stand, and who can tell but that here, under this very roof, I may be able to accomplish more than in any other way? If Mr. Grismore is really friendly to me, he will, at least for a few days, listen to my points of view. I may work subtly for this cause.” Euston’s attitude (from what she had gathered as she listened) was kindly. He appeared to wish to palliate Grismore. She, too, would palliate this tyrant, and if Euston’s gentleness was in itself a stinging irritation to the manufacturer, hers, the woman’s attitude, should score. The idea of immolating herself—for this she must do if she consented to remain under Grismore’s roof, pleased her. She took sentimental pleasure in the thought that, unknown to Euston, she would work for him, and that he could not thank her for so doing.

“If”—and she spoke aloud—“I can only succeed! If I can only make Mr. Grismore do what I want!”

Chapter VI

So fluctuating and ambulatory are the mill-town settlements, that of the some nine hundred odd hands who had been operatives in the old Crompton mills at the time Amanda Henchley was a "spooler," none remained to welcome her back when she returned in her new rôle. During the twelve years of her absence the face of the labouring contingent had changed many times. If here and there were any who had ever seen her, they had forgotten her. Her sudden disappearance from their midst had become a legend which itself went through so many phases that it was scarcely recognizable.

Euston had not been able to discover her whereabouts, and was finally authentically given to understand she had been placed in a good position at service somewhere in the North. Further he could learn nothing, and perhaps thought it better to leave her fate to its own unravelling.

The auction sale of Foster's mills took place, Amanda learned from Mr. Grismore, who frankly talked about his affairs, and outlined for her the commercial aspect of the country and social complications of the times. If she was diplomatic, he did not know it, and he was quite content to sit and talk to her without asking her why she was agreeable and pliable. The brilliant play of her features, her quick, flashing eyes, the curl of her lips, her pretty gestures, foreign and naturally graceful, all combined to render her a fascinating study. It is not strange that he fell madly in love with her, and the thought that she might leave him at any moment terrified him into tactful politeness.

Amanda went freely to Crompton, and became in the

mill town a familiar figure. Her personality utterly unsuspected, she passed hither and thither amongst the scenes of her old life, a student of the state of affairs, a keen observer of the the human beings, a philanthropist such as perhaps has never been before. A welcome visitor in the mill shanties, in the eyes of the little pastor, she was a combination of saint and woman, and he followed her footsteps with a shade of adoration only less than worship because it was fast becoming tormentingly human.

She was preparing for some *coup* which in mysterious way should bring her to Euston, and absorbed as she was the immediate surroundings of Crompton were visible through a veil. Even Grismore was scarcely an entity, and Mr. Ware's pale presence was a penumbra for the light of her constant thought.

She detected in the aspect of the mill hands a strong shade of discontent; a mighty tone of revolt ran throughout the community.

One day, as she sat in the little room of the parsonage, where they had been discussing matters of more or less importance regarding their mutual work, she asked with an abruptness so unlike her usual gentle address that the minister looked up with surprise: "Have you ever heard this Henry Euston speak, Mr. Ware?"

"Yes, I have happened to hear the famous speech on the Civilization of the Labouring Class Through the Proper Scale of Hours."

"Well?" his listener asked.

"He has power, undoubtedly—an oratorical gift that starts like fire from his desk and runs throughout the room. I am almost ashamed to say I tingled."

"Ashamed?"

"Yes," repeated the other firmly: "I do not admire his character."

The woman's eyes were intent on her *vis-à-vis*, her attention as tense as it could well be.

"I hope I do him justice for the magnificent struggle he has made against his habit," said Mr. Ware slowly and

with distinct judicial emphasis. "It is a superb victory—no secret, of course. He is said to have been a confirmed drunkard—it is very praiseworthy; whereas I don't in any way endorse his ideas for the emancipation of the cotton spinners; they are not ready for anything but what they have—labour . . . under, let us add, humane masters." He paused. (Amanda saw Grismore before them in her mind. Mr. Ware did too; and each by common consent mutually decided not to linger here.) "The poor white trash, ignorant, childlike, are easily stirred up. I notice it myself in my sermons; if I can make them cry on one Sunday, they are pretty sure to come back the next!" He smiled gently. "But to return to Euston: whereas I do him ample justice for his conquest, he has, in my eyes, nullified its importance in the value of any work he could do. . . . He is a married man, and he has deserted his wife."

To her shame, the woman before him gave an inward cry, whose note was not grief, nor was it joy; it was wonder—a cry of liberty for him, perhaps; she caught it there at her heart, and held it.

"I am told—indeed, I know—nearly twelve years ago, just as he undertook the leadership, he left this woman (she is a degraded wretch, I grant you). . . ." Mr. Ware interrupted himself significantly. "There is no divorce in South Carolina; once married, a man and woman are bound. I believe in this," he approved sternly, his clear, bright eyes on the listener, who did not speak. "Mr. Euston has gone on his emancipated, brilliant way, leaving behind him in the dust, as it were, a human soul and life which he swore before Christ and His Church to protect. . . ."

Amanda had not heard one slowly pronounced, solemn word since he had given her the bare fact of Euston's liberty! She had no plea to advance for the man—it was indifferent to her whether or not the whole world blamed him! She did not! she gloried in the fact that no human life or influence was near him—no woman's influence, above all.

Mr. Ware continued: "When I heard him speak in Atlanta I sat quite near him. In the spell of his personality—in the genius of the man, I confess I forgot everything; then it was I tingled. But once away from his empire, in the face of all he had accomplished, all he is, I became his judge. I dare to be it by virtue," he said seriously and still humbly—"by virtue of my calling and my Master's command. . . ."

His pallor had warmed a little, and he extended his slender hand in his excitement with an impressive gesture.

"Though he gives his body to be burned . . . it shall profit him nothing!"

Instead of interestedly following out the points the rector suggested by entering into a religious or ethical discussion, Amanda said, leaning forward a little:

"The lecture you heard in Atlanta Mr. Euston repeats to-night at his place called the Barracks. I want you to take me to hear him."

Mr. Ware remained in speechless stupor, staring at her. Then he echoed:

"Take you? Why, my dear Miss Morgan! it is out of all possibility! Some women do go—I believe, mill hands only. Mr. Grismore . . ."

But she frowned here, and so darkly that Mr. Ware, who had several times seen it best not to gainsay this strong-minded beauty, stopped short, the manufacturer's name on his lips.

" . . . has nothing to do with it!" Her tone was unmistakably decided.

"Why, Euston speaks in a *saloon*," emphasized the priest, "where liquor is sold against the law."

And his hearer at this point was a curious study. Her red lips twitched; she laughed a low laugh at remembrance of scenes in her past, exquisitely secret and far from her present. She seemed to smell the pungent casked liquor—the pure white fusel-oil drink she had seen distilled. She sighed, and looked away from Ware.

"Yes?" she murmured. "Liquor against the law? Oh, I know all about *that* traffic!"

"The crowds that go to Euston's are of the roughest," continued Mr. Ware. "There are disturbances—even shooting sometimes. His own life is menaced; of course . . . it is unsafe for a man . . . and for you!"

Amanda said, smiling:

"What a terrible man he must be! You all fear him so greatly. The sinister importance you give him ought to flatter him very much. A reprobate drunkard, a man unfaithfully brutal to his wife, an unbalanced venial leader of hot-headed discontents . . . why, he should either be suppressed—or ignored! Your very attitude towards him, and Mr. Grismore's, compliments him too much. But I happen to have read his reported speeches, and more temperate, clear-visioned standpoints would be hard to conceive. *I intend to hear him!*"

Poor Ware, in real distress, considered the elegant figure of the woman before him.

"You can't go," he said with a firmness at which he trembled himself; he grew red.

Amanda bit her lips, glanced up from under her hat at him, and said "*Oh!*" with actual surprise and, it must be confessed, with a little scorn.

Mr. Ware did not apologize. He blinked. Then she said coolly:

"If you can't engineer this adventure, Mr. Ware, I will go quite alone. But going I am!"

If this Beatrice had offered to conduct Mr. Ware to Inferno, he would more gladly have girded up his loins to follow. The escapade was distasteful to him. Mr. Grismore was North, and his absence made feasible an otherwise utterly impossible adventure.

Their bold scheme accordingly, through Mr. Ware's efficient if reluctant arrangement, was confided to a middle-aged woman, a spinner in the city mills. The good creature, an old parishioner of Ware's and ardent partisan of Euston's, received Amanda and prepared her for her essay.

When Mr. Ware at nine o'clock drove up in a pelting thunderstorm, he entered the low tenement on the outskirts of Rextington, his heart too near his mouth for comfort. If Mr. Grismore should know of this, he would have to leave Crompton. He scarcely spoke to his old friend Mrs. Wiggin, and with a look at once irritated and fascinated, he greeted the figure of the mill girl in dingy wrapper and old sun-bonnet.

"I've cleaned Mrs. Wiggin's stove for her." Amanda held out her hands, and she dropped her voice a little into a mellow, delicious drawl: "Ma own gran'maw sut-tinly wouldn't know me, suh!"

In spite of himself, Ware complimented her.

"What an actress! Why, you have the inflection to a T. But come, if you are still determined on this folly. Let us go."

Now that he had dared to forget prudence and reason in order to satisfy this caprice, he permitted himself a dictatorial tone.

"I have a carriage. We will have to drive to the moors; but I've secured a cicerone who knows the ropes—luckily, for there is a dreadful storm."

Mrs. Wiggin and Amanda sat on the back-seat of the rockaway, the cicerone in front with the driver, and Ware was obliged to sit between the two women. His slight form, prim and rigid in his clerical cloth, gave no evidence that this was the happiest moment of his starved, puny existence. Mrs. Wiggin was enormous, but Amanda, forced to sit well to one side, was close to Ware; a fold of her cotton wrapper fell across his knees; he could scarcely move without touching her, and for the first time he blessed Euston and his meetings on the Richland moors.

The rickety rockaway spun along on wheels thickly encrusted with mud. Directed by the negro driver leaning well out over his horse, it shot down the principal streets of the town toward the open country. Just why this mad speed should be necessary the driver alone knew. Doubtless the spirit of the adventure was unconsciously

his. When the wheels were not deep in red mud the pace was breakneck. The man next the darkey swore under his breath. They skimmed along the trolley-track, left it, and cut straight across the countryside into the meadows and squashing into the damp grass.

"Snakes!" ejaculated Mrs. Wiggin. "He suttinly dew ride us reckless!"

Amanda alone was in sympathy with the speed. It could scarcely match the pulse of her heart or the excitement in her. She might, perhaps, see as entire a transformation in herself as she had discovered in the man whose conversation she had listened to in Mr. Grismore's study. Henry Euston should on this night at last disillusion her? In all likelihood it would be the case. She would at length see with reasonable eyes the unalterable gulf fixed by Fate between them. He would be—he must be—different to what idealism had painted for her during twelve years: a social fanatic, a man still of the people, incapable of interesting certainly, in a sentimental degree. But here she remembered his voice as she distinctly heard it a few weeks before, and she was forced to acknowledge he was an unusual personaltiy, a distinguished figure. Tramp, drunkard, weaver—what you will—he could not be laughed at nor decried by manufacturer or priest; and would he be denied by her heart? Heavens! . . . as she remembered, for a one-hundreth part of a second, a midnight moment at the head of a ladder staircase . . . she drew her full lips together tightly, held them, and shut her eyes as she sat in the whirling rockaway, as though she kept and held a kiss.

"You are cold." Ware leaned to her. "You are getting wet. Let me put my coat over you."

"No—no, neither wet nor cold. What are those lights over there?"

"The Carson City Mill, and close to it Euston has his Barracks, as it is called."

They had jolted over railroad tracks and in and out of ditches, over broken ridges of earth, over a trestle, and

long past electric lights which could show them the lay of land and marsh. The direction of their destination was, however, plainly before them—the front of the Carson City Mill, brilliantly lit from base to crown. The rockaway came to a standstill.

The man in front leaped down from the seat, and stuck his head between the carriage flaps.

"You-all gotter get aout hyar. We suttinly cayn't go no further in a kerridge, suh!"

His voice struck a familiar note to Amanda, and gave her a start and shock.

"Hark! Thayre's a gun!"

A pistol-shot, sharp, distinct, cut the rain-filled air.

"Ther's shootin' hyar, and ef they knewed you was spyin', why, you'd suttinly like ez not git pricked."

Mr. Ware said to Amanda as they alighted and stood by the rockaway: "It would be fatal for me to go with you. I must wait with the carriage until Falloner brings you both back to me—*safe* . . .!" He put his hand on the big fellow's arm, and repeated the word meaningly.

Luckily the storm had poured itself out apparently, for it was ceasing to rain, and the clouds were blowing back from the sky above them.

"This is Mr. Dexter Falloner," Ware said, "a good friend of mine; you are quite safe with him."

Amanda under her sun-bonnet turned pale.

The cicerone said to her courteously: "Jest you-all tek ma ahrm, 'n' I'll carry yo' straight's a arrer, ma'am."

She put her hand in his arm without speaking, and the three started away across the rain-soaked fields.

Chapter VII

ABOUT three miles out from Rextington, in the central room of a roughly-constructed frame building, once a house and later a boarding-house for the operatives of the Carson Mills, some fifty operatives were gathered to hear Henry Euston speak.

The audience was formed of the very best type of cotton-mill hands, employés chiefly in the city mills, men whose lives since childhood had been spent before the loom, and in whom a superior intelligence had at length stirred to consciousness of their own and their fellows' miserable conditions. The room in which they met had the air of a free library; newspapers and pamphlets were scattered on tables at which some of these men lounged, whilst others found their places here and there on the benches and chairs placed with no attempt at order throughout the room. Most of the occupants on this night had been caught in the storm, and in the high temperature of the night steam rose from the soaked garments.

Amongst the auditors were not more than five women, one a very aged creature. Her thin, coarse hair wet with the rain, came down over her wrinkled brow like hay. She alone represented the Crompton settlement, and had walked out from the district in the rain; now, wet to the skin, she sat huddled in her corner, the water dripping from her garments to the floor. The other women would be at first judged nondescript specimens of mill labourers, out of whose bodies toil had evidently not unravelled the last fibre of animation—witness their appearance here, after thirteen hours' work!—but in another class of society they would have been leaders, agitators of schemes for emancipation of

their sex; organizers who, from a protected position of leisure, can devote life and money to the alleviation of their sisters' wrongs. In this instance they were wronged—the sufferers themselves, with realities at their marred finger-ends, with truthful tales of prolonged servitude and want and need and grief at their ignorant tongues' command.

In France they would have been banded together under the leadership of cruel, violent men; in Germany they would very likely have gone insane; and in Young America, first types of a too dangerous element, they still were almost harmless. Discontents one might call them, ripening to active malcontents with the times.

They wore about their shoulders little wraps; some even had their heads covered with woollen scarfs, despite the heat. On the coats and trousers of the men the cotton furze had become part of the cloth, and stuck in thick, dirty patches, mixed with the very nap of the coarse clothing. Thus draped and swathed, they were ingrained with their trade; they couldn't escape it. They spat cotton on to the floor with frequent expectorations of tobacco and snuff. The men were all smoking, and the women turning from side to side the inevitable root. Every man was armed; somewhere on his person he carried a "gun" or a razor, or both; as for the women, those of them from Carson City settlement concealed in their dress-folds a knife with which to protect their honour—to safeguard their toil-scarred, ill-fed bodies from the last violence that could be inflicted upon them.

Two late-comers joined the silent group of women—a big, comely, middle-aged creature and one younger. They quietly took seats close to the wall in the shadow.

The speaker was late; he had just returned from Washington, where he had been to see his chiefs, and in a little alcove at the back of the reading-room he was divesting himself of hat and overcoat and shaking off the rain. After a second or two the door opened sharply, and he came out amongst them. There was no

reader's desk for the man who from the precincts of this insignificant room, by way of the hearts and lips of a few, had made his voice heard all over the United States. The woman stirred as he appeared; their dullness lightened, they nodded over to him and murmured "Howdy!" The men nearest him shook hands, and not a face in the room but caught an illumination from his entrance. A relaxed tension was appreciable, and the atmosphere lifted as if a good desired, a grateful thing looked for, had come to hand.

Standing close by the table where most of the men were gathered, he drew a chair towards him, and leaned on its back.

"I'm sorry"—he spoke in a hesitating voice—"if you've all come expecting to hear what you call a 'Favourite Speech!'—I shall have to disappoint you."

His voice was so low that one pair of ears, eager not to lose one word, strained to hear.

". . . There will be no speech to-night. I have come from Washington with orders I will give you all—and then there are a few questions I want to ask."

As he stood directly under the electric lamp, the crude illumination cast its pallor on his face; thrown thus in sharp outline by the white light's pitiless frankness, it was defined with brutal absence of art.

The face revealed was that of a man to whom life had been significant. Marked by deep thinking—tense feeling: marred by deep grief and still illumined—the countenance was brilliant. Age it was difficult to connect with him, although the hair at his temples was silvering; although the lines he bore were like scars.

His indomitable determination imparted to him the vigorous power that means youth, that is its best possession.

He was clean-shaven; his mouth's expression strong and sensitive. Ten years of a control almost Titan had recast it in a new and splendid mould. The lips, which he still moistened from time to time, were red for a man, and now and then he compressed them firmly, as if a

vigorous check were needful, even at this day of his apparent utter triumph over himself. The alertness and activity of the North spoke in his intelligent eyes, whereas his gestures reflected the slow grace of the Southerners, whose companion he had been for long. Horrible scenes he had witnessed; morbid immoralities indulged on all sides of him; the spectacle of over-worked human machines had stirred morality in this complex nature. Euston lifted himself out of the mire of indulgence for his friends' sakes; he emancipated his body from the slavery of fourteen hours' daily labour for them. Through the sublimity of human pity he regenerated himself that he might be fit to act for them. For them he controlled his shaking, inebriate voice that had fainted and failed too often with the wax and wane of his passions, with his misfortunes and defeats. Now it possessed a thrilling quality, a note of passionate vibration. It was the accumulative expression of his own soul and the cries of his fellows.

His words were simple enough, devoid of bombast or sensational emotion, but no one, prejudiced or fair-minded, could hear Henry Euston speak and not accede responsiveness from the depths of whatever heart he had.

His deep-set eyes searched every face before him save one—the face of a woman sitting in the shadow quite concealed by her sun-bonnet.

“We have failed to obtain recognition,” he said slowly—“that is to say, in Rexington. The hands have gone back to work in the Rexington Mills, as you know. You couldn't hold out—how could you! Two weeks of idleness and hunger have gained you nothing and you are ready to tell me you are worse off than you were before. . . . If you say it, you are wrong! If you tell it to me over the bodies of your children whom your refusal to work has starved to death, I will say—you are wrong still! Shall I show you why? In your struggle—hopeless, if you like, failure, if you like—you have proved yourselves creatures with souls and

minds who refuse to be ground to powder that from your bodies' substance others may make gold! Now, if in your revolt you have been crushed down . . . you have made a breach with your faithful hands, and others shall pass through. You have become a stepping-stone for others to go over.

"This is not any comfort to you? I can't blame you if it is none! And to bid you eat your miserable bread of defeat with composure, to ask you to be content with the disheartening conditions at Rextington—I am not here for this. My colleagues in Rextington are angry with me . . . that is why there are so few of you to-night."

Here an old man near him spat vociferously on the floor all his jaws held of tobacco-juice.

"Not reg'lar *mad*—fer to say, Henry. I reckon they-all ain't thinkin' 'bout much 'cept fer ter keep thayre stummicks full; they-all suttinly's 'bout starved aout las' week."

Euston drew his shoulders together as if he had been struck. The words hurt.

"I know . . . I know . . . and if it had not been for the obstinacy of one man would have succeeded. That man so completely controls the manufacturing interests here that you are air in his hands! you have no substance! you are not even visible! In twenty-four hours, if we had not laid down our arms, there would have been two thousand or more imported labourers at work on the looms."

One young fellow here interposed, and his language sounded odd with his drawl:

"We'd of shot 'em, like damned raats."

"Not a shot would have been fired," replied Euston. "We had neither money nor power, and the State is against us."

He took in the occupants of the room before going on. Sitting near to the aged spinner from Crompton was a girl whose sun-bonnet flapped close round her face. Euston did not recognize her as he passed on to Falloner

—a very nervous Falloner, truth to say. He had consented to bring this lady to hear a celebrated speech, and the fact that Euston was about to hold a confidential meeting alarmed him; but he did not now dare to suggest an exit.

The leader here began to speak in short, abrupt sentences:

“Either the mill hands of this district are to remain poor-spirited slaves, or else they are to free themselves. Now, if you are men and women, I am here to give my life’s blood for you, if need be. If you are machines and content to run thirteen hours out of twenty-four for a miserable pittance of money . . . if you will work your children to death . . . if you will degrade yourselves under the basest form of unnatural toil—such as this machine-labour is—an unprogressive, uncivilizing work, year after year the same; if you are willing to accept all the conditions without revolt, I will leave Rexington and go on . . .”

Here there was a murmur, very low and pathetic; one man stretched out his hands unconsciously, as though he would stay the passing of this human, sympathetic friend, the first and only creature who had ever spoken for and to their weary existences.

“Ain’t we-all stud by yo’, Henry?”

“Yes,” he answered passionately, “God knows you have indeed! And you weavers of Rexington deserve a better issue than this first failure. But the Grismore Mills are as cold as ice. The giant of that man’s power has crushed you all at Crompton.”

“Thayre’s a po’ful lot of stirrin’ now,” said Falloner quietly. Twelve years had altered him, too. His appearance was that of the sober, hard-working operative in his Sunday clothes. He was foreman, although a weaver still. “Janet’s organized, so to say, and Crompton’s sprinkled well through with us.”

Here the old woman rose painfully from her chair. She was stiff with fatigue.

“Ih went to ma spinnin-frame at five-forty-five

thisyer mo'nin, 'n wo'ked through noon, so's to git off a spell earlier, 'n Ih left the mill at seven o'clock, 'n Ih walked hyar in the rain, tew. Ef Ih'm a machine," she said drily, "Ih reckon the mo' you-all's got o' my kine, the bettah yo' strike 'll turn out."

She shook her old hand in the air; it trembled like a withered leaf at a bare branch's end.

"Sit daoun!" The girl on her left pulled her back by the dress. "He-all cayn't talk none fer thisyer gabblin'."

The look Euston cast over to the poor creature was benignant.

"You shall not walk to Crompton; I will see that Falloner drives you women back."

The woman who had pulled the old spinner into her seat was sallow, wrinkled, her form misshapen by child-bearing and toil; she was not above twenty-five years of age, but on that face Time had relinquished his natural system of slow record marking. Labour, with abnormal rapidity, with one blow, as it were, blotted out Youth, and stamped the composite experience of a suffering lifetime.

Her face was peculiarly distorted by the play of late violent passion; her eyes, crimson with weeping, looked like coals in seas of blood.

The unprofessional tone the meeting had assumed extended apparent liberty, for she rose from her seat—rather sprang from it—and threw off with a violent gesture her black woollen scarf from her shoulders.

"They killed ma husban' sence you wuz to Rexin'ton, Henry Euston!" She choked; it was a furious convulsion in her throat, audible throughout the room. "He hed a-monia awful bayde, 'n' Ih cudn't reg'lar leave him to go spin, 'n' him so po'ful out o' his hayde. 'N' ma boy—ma boy what sweeps the aisles t' the Janet, suh—why, he's only a little fellar not more 'n ten years ole—he got reg'lar down worked aout . . ." She expelled her words as though they were missiles of fury shot by passion past her feverish lips, where the skin

was dried, cracked, and black. She seemed to attack the leader, and through him, the whole world. "Well, suh, Ih suttinly had got to thinkin' Crompton was unhealthy. Ih dew remember of bein' sick, 'n' *him* tew, nigh onto all the time; so *he* sayde we-all bettah tramp to Ireton, what et's bettah health, 'n' thar's a *human bein'* over the hands—place of a devil! So we hedn't any money, suh, 'n' owed fer little figgers o' things to hyar 'n' thayre. . . . Ih reckon et done wore on ma little Pauley's mind, suh . . . 'cause he never hed done a mean act 'fore thisyer. But" (again that rasping, convulsive cry in the throat—the strangled, suffocated soul) "Pauley . . . he done stole two dollars from the boss's overcoat et wuz a-hangin' by the sink. Pauley gimme the money, and never sayde whar he got it from, 'n' I buyed some vittles fer ma pore husban' . . . 'n' suh—Well, the p'liceman . . . !"

(Here she paused again, sobbing now in a more natural manner, her head bent forward on her chest.) "The p'liceman, Grismore done set over us all, why, he come right intew the kitchen—'n' Pauley 'd done gone to wash his han's—'n' ma husban' wuz standin' up a-lookin' at his-all gun 'cause the vittles hed give him a strength, 'n' he felt 'like a man agen,' he-all sayde. 'N' the p'liceman 'lowed he'd come fer to take Pauley to gaol, 'n' that wuz the first we-all hed hyard of the money. 'N' he drug the little feller from behine the watter-butt, 'n' Ih screeched and grabbed the p'liceman's arm, suh, 'n' I sayde: '*You-all ain't gone to tek ma little boy to gaol thataway!*' 'N' he struck me 'cross the face, 'n' Ih pitched back agen ma husban'; then, suh, ma husban' shorely did show his gun, but the p'liceman were tew soon fer him, 'n' he shot him daoun, cole . . . cole, suh!"¹

She repeated the words thrillingly, as though the very ice of death were in it. She had become hysterical, and it took a woman on either side to hold her upon her feet,

¹ True account of act at Columbia, S. C.

it seemed as though she would shake and tremble her frame into dissolution. She shrieked:

"Pauley's in prison! 'n' ma husban' buried, 'n' the p'liceman—the p'liceman he's a strompin' raound the taoun free!"

She collapsed into a moaning, sobbing heap of misery. The women on either side of her led her to the back of the room and out into Euston's bedroom.

The effect of this recital was greatest upon Euston and the strange young woman. The widow's comrades, used to scenes such as she had depicted, listened sympathetically, but turned now with unaffected interest to their leader, who resumed:

"I have never led you yet to open discontent! I was loth to sanction the Rexington disturbance, but, instead of the labourers engendering a strike, as a rule, it is forced upon them. It takes the place of the instinctively lifted hand and arm against a blow. It is an attitude of self-defence against the raid of capital. But the world doesn't recognize this. Now I counsel a strike for Crompton—Janet and the Grismore concerns. I have a little money from Washington; if I had ten thousand, I could agree to win, but even if we are certain to march to utter failure we must make this gesture of self-defence.—Falloner, you are in direct communication with the Crompton hands—sound them!"

His eyes wandered to the old spinner, whose face was still working with the emotion caused by Mrs. Raikes' story.

"Ih suttinly will lead the Janet women, Henry. Ih'll haul 'em aout from thayre 'sides.' . . ."

He nodded at her.

"You will—you can; you're a brave woman, and I would to God you were at peace before your hearth in your old age. How long have you spun in the mills?"

"Forty years."

Until now the masculine element had been silent and laggard, leaving the sensations to the women, but here a man who had an invalid wife and six children said:

"Ef Ih'm aout of work fer two weeks 'n' more ma wife suttinly will tek sick."

The man was a loyal, one-souled fellow, valuable to whatever cause he espoused; in respect to Euston's principle, he had taken all his children from the mills.

"I will personally insure the wages of any man present to-night during the strike," the chief said.

There was a perceptible stir here. The men drew themselves together in the rags and cotton-covered clothes. They were to be protected—there was to be for them a chance for manhood.

"Moreover, I will make a petition for more funds, but they are not inexhaustible. If we have four thousand hands on strike (as we should have), the best the organization can promise is bread and beans and coffee for the strike's duration, and our point is only—Recognition. Only—that when a picked few of us present ourselves at the mill-owner's door we shall be received, conferred with, man to man—Recognition! Then"—Euston leaned forward—"then we will ask for shorter hours—a working day that will permit you to breathe, to rest, to keep clean—to read, perhaps; to think, to remain human beings in spite of benumbing machinery. We will ask for hours that will allow the women to stay at home before and after their children are born . . . time for them to make homes for you men . . . to constitute a domestic life. We will demand the privilege to give a tithe of time to labour, not the sum of our beings, until the heart is sick and the head faint; till, (as I have done!) you stagger up the steps of your shanties at night too blind with fatigue, too weak with cruel exhaustion, to see the path. Time for your faculties to develop, before your brain is befogged and stultified; your ears deafened (as mine have been) from the din of wheels, the whirl of the spindles, the click of the looms. Then . . . that a broader life than this bounded by four factory walls may be yours that you may see. This is the anarchy of which I am accused. These are the unreasonable madman schemes I plead for

you—I hope for you. Schools for your children—a spirit awakened for yourselves that will force you to desire the best for them; to sacrifice yourselves for them as this weaver—Fox—does here! There must be laws to force you to this, those of you who are too blind to see the needs.

“These things will all be! When? Ah, perhaps not in the grasp of all of us here. There will be model mills run by humane and kindly men; you shall one day share fairly in the profits of your toil. . . .” Each man and woman felt personally addressed. “You will hasten this time if you are men and women fit to possess the freedom and the rights of human beings. . . . Everyone who accomplishes an end must have an ideal. Effort is useless, heavy as stone, unless fired by love. Animate yourselves with this thought, and as you bravely respond to the courageous and drastic means I shall suggest, be alive with a higher thought than your own good. The souls and futures of your children—make of them a mighty reason for your discontent. . . . Be convinced that you are working toward an ultimate, sure success, which you pray to live to see.”

He ceased; and when his voice fell to silence, it seemed to the simple souls as though heavenly bells, all atune and vocal, had stilled. His power over them was tremendous; if need had been, they would have followed him—then and there—to certain death.

The three women now reappeared from the back-room, and Euston turned to speak with the desolate widow. He gave her all the money he had. He lived on nearly nothing, his expenses being rigidly kept within a sum known to his fellows. His appearance was their pride; the fact that they were represented by a gentleman diffused a curious sense of satisfaction. They knew the details of his struggle and victory, and it was to them as if it had been their own. In his control, his distinction, they saw what they might be and attain; the difference of breeding and education most of them were too ignorant to take into account. To them he had risen from

their ranks, and they burned to follow! As he came back now into the room, his face revealed great fatigue. The journey from Washington, the harangue, a long unbroken fast, told; his eyes were glassy.

Someone had opened the door, and the air from without, though scarcely less hot, was fresh and sweet, delicious with the rain. Overhead the sky was starlit; from a distant marsh came the croaking of the frogs.

He wanted the people to go; to leave him to rest, to think, to stretch his limbs and breathe in solitude. The weight of his decision, the responsibility of many souls and lives, hung on him. He leaned forward from the shoulders, bowed as though he carried a burden.

But everyone had a word to say—a shake of the hand to give; it was some ten minutes before they cleared the room—Mrs. Conrad and the old spinner were to drive to Crompton. The strange girl had taken off her sunbonnet, and her head, under the light of the electric bulb, was unlike any mill girl's he had ever seen—a beautiful crown of copper-brown hair, little strands, loose, curling golden at the ends, and clustering around her ears and brow.

Her back had been to Euston, but, not perceiving him, she turned—so that he plainly saw her for a brief second. If a smart blow had been dealt him it could not have produced a more stinging sensation, withal agreeable. It was a shock, however; and he at first seemed plunged into an ice-cold bath—suddenly he felt the ice crack and snap with his plunge; then came the hot sweep of the reacting blood in revolt. Why, this was a dream! a vision! a not-to-be-explained hallucination—brought on by over-strained nerves and eyes! It was all caused by his own visual gift. *Such resemblances do not exist!* Was it a real woman? Or, if he rubbed his eyes, would both she and Mrs. Wiggin disappear? . . .

Falloner, at his side, said "I have pretty well gone through the Janet, Henry. With a little help she could be organized to the last man."

The girl had replaced her sunbonnet.

If it were . . . ? Why, then, she was a *mill hand* still! He grasped Falloner's arm.

"Who is the girl with you and Mrs. Wiggin?"

Falloner, guilty and anxious, said: "It's a frien' of mine, just a gyrl from Rexington."

"Where does she work?"

"To th' Ralings Mills."

"What is her name?"

"Matty," fabricated Falloner quickly.

They were now the last inmates of the room, and Euston and Falloner came over to join Mrs. Wiggin and her companion, who stood already at the open door.

"You have a clear night to go back to Rexington," said Euston, "but it will be wet underfoot."

Down in the slushy meadow, at a considerable distance, the outline of the rockaway could be distiguated. All four were outside the door, and Falloner, to anticipate whatever curiosity the vehicle might occasion, explained:

"I jest driv 'em over, it was so po'ful rainy."

Euston, saying he would go along a step with them, fell by the newcomer's side; a little behind, Mrs. Wiggin and Falloner chose their way through the morass of rain-soaked grass.

Now Amanda . . . face to face—nay, rather side by side—with Henry Euston after all these years, the wet meadowlands around you, in the distance the clicking looms of Carson's City Mills, overhead the eternal stars, what will you say! Or does your heart beat so against the cotton of your common frock that you cannot speak!

"Mr. Falloner tells me that you are working in the Ralings Mills. Like the rest, then, you, too, have gone back to work?"

She nodded and murmured what he took to be, "Yes, suh."

"The failure of the Ralings strike was a bitter blow to you all; but we are sure to win, and soon! The fact

that you have taken the trouble to come all the way out here to-night indicates you are willing to work with us."

Before she could reply Falloner and Mrs. Wiggin turned round to them; they were near the rockaway.

"I must say good-night." Euston extended his hand; the stranger put into it one as cold as ice.

"Good-night; thank you for coming."

As she threw her head back a little he saw her face again—not plainly enough for his interest and curiosity—pale as a lily, with eyes like stars, the features not clear in the starlight. But, as though she feared he might speak, as indeed, his lips seemed parted to do, she drew her hand quickly away, and hurried after the others. Euston remained motionless, staring at the figures of Falloner, Mrs. Wiggin and a man who hastily bundled the women into the carriage, and sprang in himself.

When the driver turned his horse's head Rexington-wards, Euston retraced his steps across the soggy meadow back to his house, which waited for him with the door still wide to the night.

Chapter VIII

THE first days of February had seen the return of Amanda Henchley to her own land and people. In the South this month is a presage of spring, its idolence and sweetness begin thus early to steal hard on winter. Before one is aware, the gardens of Rexington are in bloom; across fields and arid tracts in lieu of verdure lies a haze sunshot, and the piney smells come drifting down from the forests, for the air is still cool. Later spring—as far as it is able—will bring its gifts of loveliness; and how fain it will be to lay a flowery hand, a gentle touch, on the mill villages! But, as there is nothing there to respond, it withdraws abashed, and advent of the new season is only ill languor, sapping the last force from the weary spinner whom winter has left shivering. At the end summer shall come and burn and sweat from him all but life itself, which, for some untold reason, lingers mercilessly.

At the back of Crompton and the village runs the river Bye, a wide, dark stream with strong current and splendid sweep. It is the pride of the valley, this magnificent power—a very current of wealth, a very whip of prosperity. Grismore himself had a positive affection for the river; it sang to him the song of his whirring, grinding, coining mills, as it flowed on past Crompton to Penvallon.

Mr. Grismore's return to Rexington was sooner than expected. He telegraphed his arrival to Amanda, and the fact that there would be guests for dinner. His telegram, its wording, and its coming at all, indeed, made her feel herself undesirably mistress of his house—not a guest, but a head to issue orders and to give directions.

The friends Mr. Grismore was to entertain on the night of his return were Mr. Ireton and Mr. Ware.

Here on the terrace of the old colonial, its gardens already blooming with jessamine and magnolia, Ireton met the woman who had charmed him during the short acquaintance on the South-bound train. Mr. Grismore presented her as his wife's niece.

They went directly into the dining-room opening off the terrace, its table brilliant with glass and silver, and lit by high candelabra.

Amanda's hand had arranged the flowers and decorations, and Grismore, vain of his possessions, threw over to her a smile of approval which she feigned not to see. In evening dress and blown out to his fullest importance, the manufacturer appeared more unattractive than ever. Ireton showed to his best advantage in contrast, whilst little Mr. Ware's slim, pale figure was a sort of silent reproof to vigorous life and follies of the flesh.

This evening followed Henry Euston's meeting on the moors, and Amanda, weary from the effect of the emotion, had not slept, and could not chase Euston from her thoughts; his voice rang in her ears, his personality covered her like a cloud. To dispel the possession, she threw herself into whatever distraction the dinner might prove. She sat opposite Ware, between Grismore and Ireton.

"No wonder you were so interested in cotton," Mr. Ireton said. "Do you know, I think you didn't play quite fair."

Grismore heartily disliked the young manufacturer. His fair-mindedness, his humanity, were thorns in the flesh of the Boards whereat Grismore presided with the brutality of an utterly selfish man. Ireton had purchased the Penvallon Mills, in what the older manufacturer was pleased to consider an underhand way. He had bought by proxy, his name only appearing at the signing of the contracts. His evident enjoyment of Miss Morgan was in no way calculated to soothe Grismore's temper.

"You have met before, then?"

"We came along together in the same train from New York," replied Ireton.

Amanda had not mentioned it, but as, indeed, she saw fit to mention little of her affairs, his pleasure in her consisted of what he could get by looking at her and talking to her; he did not take umbrage.

"Oh, that's it, is it? Well, Miss Morgan took me rather by surprise. She came over from Europe, where she's been living for years with my wife."

Ireton, in spite of himself, betokened surprise. Mr. Grismore's wife he had never heard mentioned save in the vaguest manner.

There was, he understood, some scandal, and they lived apart; no doubt Death, the great leveller, permitted the mention of the wife's name.

"Mr. Ware,"—said the host, nodding toward the priest, "is the rector of a church I have had built on the mill property in memory of my wife."

Here Amanda, galled by the repeated mention of the woman whom she knew would not have had her name so bandied, said a tactless thing:

"And you must mark, Mr. Ireton, that in spite of the fact that they have a devoted pastor and one whose words would do them good"—she smiled over at Mr. Ware—"you must remark that the church is empty on Sundays; that is to say, there is only a handful of the three or four thousand operatives. Mr. Ware will tell you why."

Poor Mr. Ware gasped, "Oh, I can't—really!"—painfully disturbed. "I can't, indeed!"

"Come!"—Grismore would not let himself be angry with her—"come! what is the reason, Amanda?"

"Because," she slowly said—"because the hands are too tired on Sunday to do anything but rest, in the first place; and in the second place, their horrible existences put them out of sympathy with religion."

She had already gone too far. It was a breach of her promise given almost the night of her arrival. She was angry at herself, and Grismore's displeasure now found vent despite him. His face reddened.

"Don't you get to be sentimental, little girl! Leave

the mill hands alone! I do my duty by them. I have given them the best mills a man can build; labour-saving machines; I have housed them cleanly. All I ask of them is my sixty-six hours a week. Now, to my idea, my duty ends there! They have got to look out for themselves, and take care of the rest. I'm not a philanthropist," he said almost unnecessarily, "and I don't believe in combining trades."

Amanda kept her eyes on her plate. His address of her, the term "little girl," made her hot with resentment. What position was she filling here? She would go—leave the detestable roof! But he was continuing: it was her own fault for calling forth the discussion. What a reception for a guest!

"Miss Morgan goes around amongst the people contrary to my wish. You can't do them any good. It's no place for a lady—elbowed by a dirty, root-chewing mill-girl. And there are all kinds of diseases in the mill town. Nothing seems to teach them decent habits. I don't mind spending my money where I can get anything out of it, but I declare it seems a shame to put up clean houses, and then see them treated the way they treat my shanties. They live like hogs!"

Ware, too pained and uncomfortable to speak, Ireton sitting in disgusted silence, Grismore had the floor to himself. He ate quickly a few mouthfuls of the delicacy before him, then said:

"Schools! why, they won't use schools! What's the good of educating everybody, anyway? There wouldn't be anyone to do the work if they all knew as much as you and I do."

He was calming, and remembering what the woman at his table had sprung from, he came to himself suddenly with the old terror of having offended her. He glanced over at her as she sat, fair and silent;—her hands in her lap, her eyes staring at the centrepiece of ferns in front of her. She was very pale.

"Come," he said, "what's the use of talking shop because we've got two cotton manufacturers here at the

table? Ware, I don't dare say change the subject; there's nothing more dangerous to peace than *religion!* "

He laughed at his own *esprit*, and Ireton drew a breath of relief. He would have preferred this beauty to be less socialistic, a little more stupid.

Ireton, with the freedom a perfect stranger has often over a familiar, asked just the question Grismore had longed to, and had dared not:

"You have returned to America—definitely? "

And it summoned her for the first to consider her own plans for the future.

She turned her handsome eyes to the young man, and said with a charming smile:

"*Definitely*, and such words as that, have no place in the vocabulary of an unmarried woman! I am free, and therefore I don't know what to do; I haven't decided."

"She's going to stay right here for the present!" said Grismore cheerfully, taking the matter out of her hands with such complacency that she could have run from his house for her life—thereupon!

But Grismore could not keep from "talking shop." He had, indeed, no other conversation, nor did he fancy a conversation of any length between Amanda and Ireton: so he asked the young man abruptly:

"What do you know about this fellow Euston? "

"Little and much," replied the other slowly. "He is an extraordinary character—a man of great power and something like genius."

At that the host threw back his head and laughed.

"By Jove!" he said, "I wouldn't have asked you if I had dreamed he had fooled you too."

Ireton flushed.

"It may seem extraordinary for a manufacturer to perceive qualities in a confessed enemy," he said quietly. "I don't think so. I heard this man in Washington speak to a mixed assembly of many thousand people, and I have never been more impressed. If labour organizations were composed of men like him, an opposition party

wouldn't stand a show. He may end up by martyrdom. The people follow him as if they were hypnotized."

"Rubbish!" snorted Grismore. "He ought to end up in gaol, and he will if I can put him there. I understand my mills are partly organized. If I knew who the men were, I'd drive them out at a gun point. As for Euston——" He paused and looked around his table as if to find some convenient weapon to fell him with; there were only the shining glasses and objects of luxury at his hand. He took up his wine glass and emptied it before he spoke. "Why, there are men who meet their deaths here every few months by chance shots. I wonder what the deuce spares *him*?"

Amanda rose, saying, "It is hot here, with so much candle-light; I think I shall go into the parlour, and leave you to smoke."

And Mr. Ware, who had not spoken throughout dinner, rose with her. Not in manhood daring to be silent longer, despite his bread and butter at stake, he said nervously:

"You are severe on the man, Mr. Grismore. If his theories are mistaken, they are sincere; he has shown in his regeneration a force of character that must win admiration, and he is pity's self to the poor and suffering. As I don't smoke, I will join Miss Morgan."

He bowed and left, beating a hasty retreat.

Grismore stared open-mouthed after him, as though at a gosling who had dared to prate at the moon.

"By ——!" he said to Ireton, refilling his glass, "I don't care a —— for Euston, mind you, but as for *that*"——he nodded his head toward the parlour——"if my hands don't go to hear him peep, why, they've more sense than I thought they had."

But Ware had pleased Ireton, as, indeed, anything in contradistinction to this brute would have been sure to do. Half an hour later Ireton went out through the drawing-room to the terrace, where he could see by a white dress shining in the darkness that Miss Morgan was alone. She turned at his footsteps.

"Are you coming out here? You won't be able to see"—and forthwith touched a button, lighting the veranda by electricity.

Ware had just left her, after having been the troubled recipient of her angry storm of disgust and disapproval. She had, without considering him aught other than a sympathetic friend, forced him to listen while she gave her feelings vent. This emotion left her flushed and excited. Ireton was not slow to imagine a little of the circumstances. He had just passed Mr. Ware, to whom he bade good-night.

"You can't guess how awfully glad I am to see you again," he said with attractive frankness. "May I sit here a few moments? I've thought of you often since that trip South. It's a month ago, isn't it? and it's great luck to meet you again."

She regarded him with friendly eyes; his warm, generous backing of Euston, his honest, kindly attitude appealed to her. She liked him, and he felt it distinctly with a thrill of delight. She was troubled and annoyed, it was plain to see, and he determined not to linger; she undoubtedly wished to be alone.

"I can only stop a moment," he said, leaning forward in the chair. "My train goes at twelve. I am going back to Penvallon to-night, but I wish you were visiting anywhere else in Rexington but here. I should like to come to see you."

"And why can you not?"

He shrugged his shoulders, and, looking toward the light of the inner house, dropped his voice.

"To tell you the truth, your uncle and I are not friends. He does not like me, and I should not feel welcome."

"You should be flattered," she said coldly, "by his dislike. But don't call me his niece, please; I am the adopted daughter of his wife."

It was on his lips to say, "Why are you here? You shouldn't be; it's all wrong; you mustn't stay," when she spoke:

"I shall not be here long. You see what a rude, unmannerly guest I am." She bit her lip.

"No, no," he hurried, "not that; but it's unfair to one's self to remain where everything is uncongenial. I think it is an actual wrong to one's self to live in unsympathetic surroundings."

"I should like to see Penvallon," she interrupted, with abrupt change of subject. "May I come over some time and visit your mills?"

"Oh, will you?" He glowed with anticipation.

"Yes, with Mr. Ware some day—when you like."

"Perhaps Mr. Ware can find me a chaplain," Ireton suggested. "I have just fitted up a building for a church."

"You couldn't do better than to take Mr. Ware himself," Amanda returned. They both rose; Mr. Grismore was coming out. "From what Mr. Ware just said to me, his experiments with Crompton have been disheartening." . . .

She smiled.

" . . . I think he is pining for a better harvest. Good-night."

She gave him her hand, and went into the house by another door as Grismore came out.

After Ireton, some quarter of an hour later, had taken leave Grismore turned about from the front-door, and went through the drawing-room and dining-room. At the buffet he poured himself out a generous glass of brandy, and drank it. Carefully wiping his lips, he recorked and replaced the bottles among the decanters. The scene at dinner had annoyed him and angered him; his mind and senses were disturbed. Unlike the majority of tyrants he was no coward, and although his emotional nature was under the sway of his present infatuation, it was towards conquest—he was moved. He had no dread of defeat; he knew in order to win he would have to play a daring game. Nothing was too much of a sacrifice, but *he must win*. Failing, he would without com-

punction crush Amanda, if he could, as relentlessly as he marched over living bodies towards the coining of his wealth. But he had not gone so far in his mind as failure. He was thinking of her—her tantalizing, mocking face, her devilish good looks. His hands deep in his pockets, his head bent, he slowly went upstairs into his library, prepared for his solitude, and drew back with a surprised word. Amanda sat at the table reading. She shut the book as he came in, and still held it, one finger marking the place.

"Well!" He came forward with alacrity. "This is a pleasant surprise! I thought you had gone to bed long ago."

Perhaps at no time in her life had she felt so ill at ease as at this very moment. She had dealt with a variety of temperaments with tact and cleverness. She had been exposed to actual danger in her youth. Here she felt dangerously impotent. There was no meeting between the gross sensualist and herself; no neutral plane on which she might summon to her the kindly soul of a man who would respond to ideas of justice and humanity. She was afraid of him. She had not realized, during the week of his absence, how distinct his individuality was; nor, in her interest in the mills, her concentration on Euston's life, had she in truth considered him as a person at all. Now she must do so, and here he was, his eyes, lighting with a sentiment all too horrible, his face more antipathetic than ever under its guise of affection.

She had not chosen to wear dinner-dress, but her gown of white material, embroidered in silver flowers, was a creation—a bit of apparel that the little mill girl's maddest feminine desires could never have woven out of the fabrics and stuffs of her naïve dreams.

"I didn't wait up to give you a surprise." Her voice was as cold as she could command it to be. "I stayed for two reasons—one to beg your pardon. I was rude at dinner; I had no right to speak as I did of your affairs and interests."

Before she could give her second reason for her presence, Grismore broke in effusively:

"Nonsense, Amanda! The idea of thinking of such a thing twice! Why, that's all right, my girl!"

He drew a chair up, and seated himself close to her. She could not withdraw, as she was already against the table.

"That's all right," he repeated; and her presence and apology so delighted him that it quite took him off his feet. "I dare say you are not all wrong in what you say! You've been what these poor devils *are*, and you've seen them as I can't, of course; and what you say about the church matter shall be attended to. No wonder they don't go to hear Ware! I wouldn't. We'll ship him!"

Her face was unmoved; the white of her dress seemed to melt up to it. She would have been a beautiful woman anywhere; to him she was dazzling. She raised the book she held, and looked down into it as though her answer were contained in it, and she refreshed her memory by a glance.

" . . . And the other thing I have to say is that I'm going to-morrow."

His hands on his knees, in their usual outspread position, relaxed.

"Going to-morrow!" he repeated in a totally changed tone. "Where to, pray?"

"That," she said, and drew a breath of relief, "I don't know yet."

For a second neither spoke.

With the habit of adjusting his mind to difficulties, he prepared his attack.

"I didn't take in that I've been such a poor host. I'm brusque, I know—a rough-and-ready sort of a chap—but I confess I don't quite see what I've done so monstrous that I am driving a guest out of my house without word or warning."

His tone was a complete change from the habitual arrogant swagger she so detested and shrank from. He

spoke with dignity and sincerity, and she had no immediate reply ready. What was there to say? He had in truth done nothing but be himself—hateful, brutal; but he had been all this before!

"You have been, on the contrary, very kind indeed; it is *I* who am impossible! I begin to discover I should be rude again. Our ways of thinking are so different."

He broke in sharply.

"Well, that's not so strange! You're a young woman who has struck the luck to inherit what is a very pretty sum of money. I'm a hard-working, self-made man. I've had to sweat like a nigger for every cent I've got. If I seem to you a hard, cruel master, there's no reason why I shouldn't improve—is there?"

She shook her head.

"It's not for me to criticize you."

He had cleverly disarmed her. A hot protest from him would have greatly aided her flight, but this meek attitude was difficult to affront; he had never appeared so nearly attractive.

"I don't see why you shouldn't criticize me," he said quietly. "I'm ready to listen, to learn as well, and your heart is honestly engaged in the work you've been at over in Crompton. Why, it seems to me it's worth a little effort to discuss ways and means. See what you could do for those four thousand souls under my jurisdiction!" He watched her with a cunning of which she was unconscious. "Not," he parenthesized, "that I pretend to say I'm all wrong, and you're right. But I say, if I'm a barbarian in my relations with my mill hands, I'm willing to consult with you, and to see your side, and improve my methods."

He was willing to do more than this—he was ready at that moment to make her his wife; but he knew that if he evinced one shade of personal interest in her now, his cause was hopeless henceforth. His hands were cold with excitement, and, in spite of the brandy, his florid colour had faded; only his nose remained red and somewhat swollen; the veins palpitated in it.

Amanda refrained from looking at him as much as possible.

"I promised Mrs. Morgan"—purposely using her adopted mother's assumed name—"to come back to Rextington to see you—to tell you, as I have, of her life and death, to fetch you her pardon. And when I had done this I spoke to you then, in her name, of certain qualities which she possessed—qualities it is good to have—I spoke to you of certain mercies to be done. You were not moved then to hear me—why should you be now?"

The reference to his wife irritated him at this juncture; it served to chafe the smoothness of his mood. He said, with a brusque gesture:

"Come! If I wasn't affected then by what you said—if I've never been decent in my life, that's neither here nor there. I'm giving you a chance that the philanthropist idiots and the Labour people would sell their souls for. If you care to visit here a little longer, a little longer"—he looked at her from under his eyelids. Her eyes were straight before her; the light from the lamp danced in the silver roses on her bodice—"why, I'll put the reins in your hands." (Here she did look at him quickly, and exclaimed "Oh!") "If you don't ruin me," he mitigated, "you can have things pretty much your own way."

Just how completely she took him at his word he did not care; his point once gained, he could temporize, delay, circumvent.

Euston flashed to her mind—"Do as she liked!" She raised the book she held, and pressed it to her heart. Grismore put out one hand as if to ward off the flood of benefits already threatening to pour over from a horn of revolution. "*So long as you don't ruin me!*" The millennium that even with half his permission she might herald to those bound slaves blinded her! She could prevent the strike; she could secure Euston from the danger of his enterprise!

"You mean to tell me that if I will consent to remain here a little longer you will give me free sweep with the

mills?" . . . And before he could ratify or hedge she was struck by the expression of his face. . . "Why," she asked in an altered voice—"why do you do this?"

She had risen and was making her way toward the door as if to run from the stifling atmosphere, and murmured, "No, no; I must go from here to-morrow!"

But Grismore had sprung up as well, and was before her at the door, his hand on the knob.

"By——! you shan't go! Not like this! I've done nothing to make you scorn me, Amanda. What have I done or said that you treat me like the dirt under your feet? I've just made you the biggest offer a man could make; I put the biggest interest of my life in your hands."

"I have no right to do it—no desire to have!"

"Never mind that. I ask nothing in return. Stay two weeks," he urged, "and don't shake the dust of my house off like this. I swear to you I won't offend you by word or deed—I swear."

She wavered. The scene at the moors the night before came vividly to her mind. By his proposition he placed the fate of the miserable cotton-spinners in her hands. What was she that she should not sacrifice her tastes, her inclinations, her prejudices, her principles almost, if she might even ever so little lighten that vast burden? Two weeks!

"It is a bargain." She tried to say it lightly, and to look at him with less loathing. "I stay two weeks, and I am mistress of the mills!"

In sheer triumph and overwhelming satisfaction, he seized her hand, but let it fall at once, murmuring an apology.

"Will you open the door for me? Good-night."

And she slipped out so swiftly and disappeared so rapidly that he feared his uncontrolled touch of her had lost her to him, and that morning would find her gone.

He seated himself at his table, and undid a packet of docketed letters and papers. With these he sat until

nearly morning. One o'clock saw contracts signed, orders accepted and solicited, engagements undertaken, that would keep whirling to their speed-limit every Grismore loom in and out of Rexington for a month. This meant hours lengthened at both ends; night-shifts enlarged; hands young and old employed to their last power of endurance.

When he had finished he called up a negro servant, and sent him out with a handful of despatches to be sent from the Rexington Hotel at the first possible hour. When he went to his bedroom it was nearly morning, and he retired full of satisfaction at a Napoleonic stroke of diplomacy.

"It ought to take her well into the week to mow down these new oppressions!" he mused; "the old evils will keep."

And he was able to fall to sleep. A slumber like to his—the same God-given gift locked the spinners and weavers of his shanty town. Grismore felt he had earned his rest; perhaps they felt they had earned theirs. At all events, there was no rest in the mad, passionate rush of the river as it washed the shores of the terrace-foot or in the whirring of the never-ceasing Crompton looms.

But there was no rest for Amanda. She threw off her dress and wrapped herself in a white gown, drew an easy-chair to the open window, and gave herself up to her thoughts.

Without every tree and bush stood motionless in the windless night. The sky, black and profound, was broken here and there by far-away star-points shimmering hard and soulless through the folds of the clouds. The warm odour of the magnolias rose from the fragrant garden, recalling to her scenes in Europe during the happy, sheltered years with Mrs. Morgan. Of these memories she could not now make friends. They were effaced by the brusque entrance upon old scenes; and the links with the past, the absorption in her people, were

none the less intense because animated by personal interest in Henry Euston.

As she sat musing, her form white in the darkness, one bare arm exposed as the loose sleeve fell back, she betrayed no trace of her primitive origin, although the mill had not had time to stamp her with its cruel brand, the spirit of the forest-born was in her heart. Her eyes reflected still the humble forms of things she had known and loved in her early life, and the blood of the people stirred like fire in the veins of this daughter.

"How could she best serve them?"

She was not deceived by Grismore's promises. But he meant something of what he had said. If she could not force a millennium, she could perhaps secure *Recognition* for Euston's committee, and avoid the horrors of a strike.

She must see him. . . . Consult Mr. Ware? Ah, he was not to be turned to in this mighty moment. She smiled. Poor little man! How unequal the Giant Burden of Souls had found his narrow shoulders for their carrying! . . . The noise of the river broke in upon her train of thoughts. Its unmindful, insane rush annoyed her. How pitiless was the force of which man imagined he made a slave! Heedless of the tragedies on the shores it fertilized and made rich; heedless of the heart-breakings in the households it nourished and sustained; heedless of the dull quota of misery in the mill towns past which it took its tempest-like way! She shivered, and rose to draw in the blinds. The soft pick of a mandolin and guitar made her pause, lean out, and listen. Some of Grismore's coloured servants had stolen to the back of the house with musical instruments. As though Fate determined thoroughly to ally her with her past and her girlhood, one negro voice broke sweetly into the little song now popular in Rextington:

"Oh, show me a little whar I'll fin' a rose."

It touched her infinitely, as she compared with this dark race, freed from shackles that had been visible to

the world—the pale slaves toiling, at the moment, not three miles away in Crompton Mills.

“Oh, show me a little wh’ ma sweetheart goes;
I’ll foller her all the while. . . .”

Where was Cally Griscom—and the others? Where was her sister!—*her own sister*? This thought forced itself upon her memory and conscience. Insistently it came, and with it the delicious smell of the dry pines, and the familiar picture of the cabin in the woods.

Chapter IX

IN the past twelve years Euston had seen the traditional grain of mustard-seed fulfil its promise.

From an uncouth little band, a handful of men gathered at old Ireton—power had gone forth to be felt throughout the entire Southern cotton belt. In 18—the first strike organized by Euston secured an hour's reduction on the day's work. Thereafter an altogether miraculous success met him wherever he went; his relations with toiling humanity; the confidence of his chiefs; the consciousness of power, created for him a certain happiness entirely based on unselfish devotion to an ideal cause. Peace was a natural enough reward to Euston, for he was a conquerer, and the sense of victory had not been disturbed until the last meeting on the moors.

He avoided Rexington; its associations were painful to him. The greater part of the years had been passed in the districts of Alabama, Georgia, and in the North, where he had gone directly from old Ireton. He had put himself in touch with Labour chiefs and philanthropists, become a student of the social questions of the times, an active agitator—"of discontent," his enemies said; "an awakener of souls" he chose to believe.

After the events in Penvallon, a delegation from Ralings Mills in Rexington sought Euston out, and he reluctantly acceded to their demand for organization. But once in Rexington, despite its disagreeable, sad, and haunting memories, he decided it must be his definite place, after all! It was the thick of the combat—the vortex of opposition—and the vortex of need.

Here Mr. Grismore represented joint interests of the

richest Northern cotton capitalists. Regarding this man Euston had a superstitious feeling. He had never seen him since the hour Grismore had insultingly driven him, a drunkard, from his employ. Euston believed they would some day come face to face over a vital issue.

The strike at Ralings was an absolute failure. Euston's chagrin in this instance had been overwhelmed by his pity and sympathy for his wretched disciples. He had been obliged to observe two thousand men and women at the time of direst need and in the fatal mental state of inertia combined with despair. The gentle, docile character of these operatives was particularly touching; their obedience to him, their blind adoration, made him at times feel a criminal as he looked from their wasted forms to the silent mill, and knew that it required only a nod of acquiescence from him to send them all back to their looms.

This strike—a hasty one—forced upon him against his judgment, proved, however, that the situation at Rexington was ripening fast. These people were less naïve than the hill-folks of Penvallon and Ireton. They were more close to citizenship, living as they did in one of the largest towns of the South; in constant touch with daily events. They chafed in their bonds, longing for a leader, and they embraced Euston's theories with an ardour that inflamed him too quickly. Unfortunately he had been unable to reach them all, and they had prematurely rushed to meet Grismore's bulldog obstinacy, only to realize the limitation of their funds and their impotence.

Euston's command to capitulate came none too soon. Grismore, in event of their holding out against him for a longer time, had determined on a "lock out," which, if carried into effect, would have starved the exhausted creatures like victims of a plague. Close upon this the purchase of Penvallon came with balm.

A Northern manufacturer stopping at the Rexington Hotel begged Euston to meet him there for a private interview. It was none other than William Ireton,

proprietor of the Ireton concern, the rich son of a richer father. He talked several hours *en tête-à-tête* with the Labour agitator.

In the lobby of the hotel, at the close of the interview, Ireton paused, and said: "You don't connect me with your past at all—Mr. Euston?"

Euston confessed—no! There was so little of his past he cared to connect with his present . . . that he would not lose this pleasant memory! What did Ireton mean?

"You were at Harvard in 18—; we had a singular conversation together. . . ."

Then Euston in a flash remembered the student whose impulsive generosity had assured life and salvation to two human creatures. He put out his hand, and warmly grasped Ireton's.

"I hope I can repay you that service some time!"

Ireton laughed. "You don't want the act to have its own reward, then? But I *do*! What you were that night I have never forgotten—please let me say it has left its indelible mark on my life. Although I am out of sympathy with your theories, I can't never be entirely antagonistic to you."

And closing their former conversation, he said: "If I can purchase Panvallon, I will. You may organize there on one condition, before you incite my people to revolt give yourself the trouble of *coming first to me*. There is a great deal of talk about arbitration. It seems to me that mutual understanding between employer and employés is not a bad beginning."

Ireton argued that things forbidden possess temptations quite likely to disappear when the fiat is withdrawn. He believed that his "hands," freely permitted to organize, assured, moreover, of confident access to himself—would find the spirit of discontent nipped in the bud. Euston accepted his suggestion.

This far Ireton conformed. In the question of Child Labour, in the question of time schedule, he stood with the other manufacturers.

Euston saw him leave the hotel—young, respected, wealthy, an able employer, a representative of one of the strongest types of the country. His honourable position from his birth had been assured. As he watched him going briskly out into the afternoon sun, he thought to himself: “This I might have been if I had had a father to educate, to care for me! if I had not been summarily flung into the very face of adversity—a challenge, as it were, for Fate and circumstances to do their worst!”

Although Labour questions and beneficent schemes absorbed Euston, he wondered very continually who the woman could be that Falloner had brought to his meeting. It was not easy to reach Falloner at any time. Euston’s presence on the Grismore’s precincts was out of the question, and he had made a rule never to send for anybody from the different mills.

He was established in the deserted “barracks,” and held himself at the people’s disposition; they sought him there, and there they found him. He had never stirred up, until now, a dissension in all his career. When the cotton-spinners came to him he listened and advised, and sowed no seeds of discontent.

This, to the present, had been the history of Henry Euston until the appearance of Dex Falloner’s friend at his meeting to disturb his thoughts. The slight possibility that this stranger was Amanda Henchley awakened memories undesirable at all times when they connected him with his past and his discarded wife.

What use, if it were Amanda, to see her or renew relations? If she appeared upon his present, it would be to tax him with the desertion of her sister, as she had done twelve years before, in the Rextington gaol. Euston recalled the scene perfectly, and the little accusing face, the pretty hair filled with burrs. He had taken a yellow leaf from the tangles; he had kept it a long time. Memorably that day Amanda had first appealed to him; it had not required more than a week to disillusion him with the degraded nature of the girl he so rashly wedded.

Viewed in the calm of his later years, it was the direst folly of a desperate, half-sane youth.

The feelings which Amanda had later awakened in him were of quite another quality. Gratitude, admiration for her strong, unselfish character, the tribute she forced all people to pay her of respect—followed in his case—in an easy sequence by gentler sentiments. It was not until weeks later, when they had lived together in the same house, worked in the same mills, that he realized how absorbed he had grown in the little sister of his wife. He had thought of her as a little girl, and he awoke one day to the knowledge that she was a woman. The talk at the scaffolding in Crompton village, when with his farewell sight of her came the knowledge that it was Amanda he had so passionately embraced in the cabin of the backwoods, vividly impressed him, and the pulse of it had taken long to wear away. It was this remembrance, in its natural fever, in its fatal force of animal passion, that returned to him now when he found himself alone with his problems in the little house on the moors. If this were Amanda Henschley, as far as he could tell in that brief sight of her, she had developed into a very unusual woman.

Euston kept clear of women. His temptations in the South, whatever they were, he controlled for the sake of the people he represented, for whose sakes he had regenerated himself thus far. If it were Amanda, he would avoid her for every reason in the world, and if it were *not* Amanda, he did not care to see her again. After having thus decided, he set himself to plan out the intended strike, which should have for its first modest plea the demand for recognition from the manufacturers.

Chapter X

A LITTLE out of the disorderly ugliness of Rexington is the one beauty the town possesses—a church dating back into the early part of the nineteenth century. It is surrounded by a churchyard, where, under magnificent oaks and lindens, the tombs of the city's forefathers crumble and decay, the lines in quaint English on the stones half effaced by the fingers of the moss. Vines and myrtle run luxuriously over the gray tablets and over the church itself, its soft pink granite warmed by the genial climate and the mellowing years.

The coolness of the enclosure and the shade of the trees made it in the late afternoon an especially attractive place for a tired man to withdraw to to seek rest and refreshment. Euston, returning from Penvallon Mills toward six o'clock, saw the church, dim and inviting, and wandered back, intending to stroll through the gardens, and rest beneath the heavy shade of the trees. The day had been exhausting, but its close promised coolness and relief. The copper sky clouded a little, and a wind stirred heavy with the scent of jassimine and lily growing in abundance in the enclosure. Euston opened the rusty gate and went in, glad to see he was alone, and master of the place and time. The door of the church was wide open, and within he could see the cool darkness of the aisles and naves. The sound of the organ, low and vibrating, told him his solitude was not unbroken, and rather than come face to face with some unfriendliness, as he was often likely to do, he went across the grassy lawns to the opposite side of the curfew under a giant oak. There in its profound shadow he took off his hat, stood with uplifted head, thoroughly enjoying the sweetness of the delicious air. The soft melancholy

undertone of the music reached him here. Someone was playing pianissimo an evening hymn, and it contributed delightfully to Euston's mood.

After a little the music ceased, and he could hear within a man and a woman talking together. They were coming out of the church, and Euston was in full sight of the open door.

Mr. Ware, the little clergyman of Grismore's Mill, came out first. By his side was a woman in white dress, white hat, a blue scarf round her waist. Drawing on her gloves, she stood a few moments talking to the clergyman.

Suddenly she turned and saw Euston standing bareheaded under the trees. Without explaining to the clergyman, she left him abruptly, and came directly onward toward Euston, traversing the green very quickly, then slackening her pace.

He gazed at her in bewildering surprise not for long—not for long! She put out her hand to him, smiling deliciously, and, before she had spoken a word, he knew it all in a flash. . . .!

In a voice full of sweetness and emotion, she said:

"Don't you *know* me—don't you *remember* me? I am Amanda."

And this had been their meeting! Overcome by its suddenness, embarrassed and constrained, the woman, more quickly at ease than the man, had spoken a few indifferent words. With hearts full of wonder and delight at having found one another again in the waste of life—changed—yet still unchanged, they stood for a space too short, and looked into each other's eyes.

In his house the same night Euston walked to and fro, a man in a waking dream. It was then a thousand years since that morning—since, in a composed frame of mind, he had harangued a little band of men and women in Penvallon, and then gone forth to his various duties and absorbing interests? Well, so they were, so they had been! Did they not touch most vital questions

at issue all over the modern world? In this moment of excitement they seemed toy shapes compared with a living, breathing body. They hung in clusters of ashen fruit—white, pale—beside the tense centre of a flame.

Euston's life might be divided into definite parts. For sensations, which touch not alone the senses, but the soul, mark the real epochs in the history of men and women. When he discovered at the hour of his mother's death his illegitimacy; his regeneration on the night of the meeting at old Penvallon; now a third! At first he gave himself up to the heavenly realization the afternoon had been. Amanda Henchley, connected with an evil, past, was a beautiful woman—tender, humane—with a spirit as high as her brow was white, with a tenderness as deep as those profound, serious eyes. She had remembered him all these years when she might well have forgotten him with proper disgust! Not alone had she remembered him,—but she had sought him out to renew their relationship. True, she had not found him where she had left him! . . . She was in an atmosphere at present antagonistic to Euston, but she had taken pains to express to him, in words whose beauty he could never forget—her sympathy. What had she said?

"I have read your speeches. I have no words to say how great I think you have become. I assure you, the night I heard you speak, I was nothing but Amanda Henchley again—a mill girl—palpitating with my people's wrongs, echoing from my heart all you pled for."

She had asked him no question; not one word had taken either of them back into the past. Now, as he thought of her, he saw that he would like better than anything else to tell her of every step of his way.

They had only been together a few moments. Mr. Ware drove up for her far too soon, and she had left Euston with a good-bye and a promise to find means to see him again. . . . Deep as was her sympathy in all he had done, sincere as was her confidence, she disapproved of his proposed strike at the Grismore Mills; she begged him to wait ten days—for what reason?

Oh, she would show him soon! She would prove to him that she was more his friend than Grismore's; she begged a certain trust in her! She had heard Mr. Ireton of Penvallon the night before at dinner speak so admiringly of Euston. Had he not given Euston recognition without the necessity of a strike? . . . If in ten days Mr. Grismore did not extend this same reasonable courtesy, she would withdraw her demand, then Euston should strike as he saw fit. Give her this time!

But when he left her he had time to wonder, with something like jealousy, what she could do with Grismore that would make him grant a concession Euston believed nothing in the world could wring from him but force? He regretted that he had conceded this. He longed to see her again, to prove to her that the time was ready for the insurrection. He longed to see her again—in fact, this alone was reason enough!

Chapter XI

JUSTUS WARE would perhaps have known as little and as much of life at one time as another had the event of Amanda not traversed his horoscope.

Educated at Oxford, the son of a ritualist dean, he had come to the States in the position of tutor to a Manchester cotton-merchant's son. On their way to Florida the young men made a tour of inspection through the largest mill concerns. Ware, impressed, not by the squalid misery he saw, but by the spiritual darkness, took a sudden resolution, and after accompanying his pupil to England, himself returned to America as missionary priest. Alabama and Georgia had been pretty thoroughly traversed by him when he first appeared at Lily Bud Euston's door twelve years ago, and was forthwith the means of Euston's emigration to the old Ireton Mills.

He pursued in the South a gentle, colourless existence: his delicate form nourished by bread the people knew not of; otherwise he would have starved, for he gave extravagantly for the propogation of the Gospel. He was one of those organisms whose sufferings are for others. He suffered with his flock. For himself he scarcely knew what physical sensation was; whereas of mental and spiritual exaltation he had run the gauntlet. His face wore sometimes an expression of gentle dismay at the horrors of life; and again a puzzled questioning, as though he were trying to reconcile facts around him with his idea of a merciful God. Religious fanatics are singularly callous to physical need and pain; they have so triumphantly kept the body under that they are exalted beyond their fellows. Ware travailed for his parishoners' souls, and not until Amanda appeared, with her

normal animal revolt against the bondage of flesh and blood, did Ware think of the Crompton and Janet people as having bodies at all! Strange to say, as he awoke to see himself in a very material world of fleshly beings with vital, if vulgar, needs, he awoke as well to discover himself a human being with them—a man at last.

As a young priest he had taken the vows of celibacy, and of late those promises, so sacred and expedient, had become chafing bonds. From the hour he was conscious of Amanda, as an adorable woman, began for Justus Ware—the real suffering, and struggle of his life. He would have as soon contemplated suicide as the breaking of his vows, and after a little he perceived the breaking of vows would avail him nothing, for in Amanda's eyes he was exactly what he had schooled himself to express—a spiritual essence, a symbol, a priest, nothing more! Her freedom with him, her ease in their discussions, her gentle familiarity, was a scourge of chagrin. Often as she talked over some project, and she leaned toward him bent over a book or a letter, the space between them was infinitesimal—a kiss could have bridged it.

The Maker of hearts alone knew the anguish of the little priest and his control.

These things in his case were not to be cast out by prayer and fasting; the animalism of the flesh needed sterner reproof. He relegated himself to the Middle Ages, and used the scourge. In his little room of Crompton Parsonage cruel blows fell on his body. Amanda was far from imagining that the timid man had shed his blood because of her too earthly beauty and his vows.

Therefore he welcomed Grismore's dismissal from Crompton, and took it as a divine ordering that the cup was to pass from him—in this separation he would cure his disease, he made no doubt.

Chapter XII

AT the end of her first week Amanda felt she had compressed a life-time into the embrace of seven days.

Much of it she had spent *tête-à-tête* with her host, papers and plans between them. On her part a confused whirl of philanthropic ideas made toward the impossible millennium to the enthusiast who would alter the face of the industrial world by a few reforms. On his part a well-ordered thinking machine comprehended the whole situation, and that present conditions will continue as long as industrial supply and demand employ flesh and blood instead of mechanism. He knew labour and capital to be inherent enemies, whilst as indispensable to each other, as close-knit, as the Siamese twins. Grismore clung to his clause, "So long as you don't ruin me"; and with contracts to deliver bewildering amounts of cloth to many countries, with competition hard on his heels, he forced her common-sense to temporize even as she projected and planned. Eight hours a day! How impossible the time seemed with Grismore before her! Share in profits! What a film-like theory to propose to the backwoods cotton-mill hand! She was fain to content herself with what, in slow sequence, she could evolve from the most crying needs. Although her host refused nothing, he made her by his subtlety demand almost nothing! until she felt that only a revolution could free these white slaves.

School-house, gymnasium, library—all these Grismore was ready to give. These flags waved to an admiring public, he was willing to pay for. At the week's end what had she? She had gone round and round in a circle, and save that she was nervous, tired, disgusted with him, and angry with herself, there was no per-

ceptible change. A proposed hospital, a district nurse, the abolition of the superintendent's visit upon women sick in bed—these were the concessions. Yet withal he continued to make her feel useful, and that she was working toward an ultimate adjustment. She obtained special favours for certain poor and sick protégés of hers at Crompton, and the blessings she received as she bestowed the gifts were the sole balm poor Amanda knew.

As for Ware, Grismore took him well in hand before the day following Amanda's concessions! Mr. Ware was given to understand that if there was a vacancy at Ireton for a clergyman, he would do well to look out for it. In response to Amanda's indignant protest and her prayer that he would remain, he consented to stay at Crompton for a fortnight, no more.

Beside her friendly liking and respect for Mr. Ware, he was invaluable to her in furthering her plans for seeing Euston. She had been able to contrive for just one interview, exciting and unsatisfactory. The tremendous point at issue, "What shall I urge upon Mr. Grismore? What can I do for the mills?" became no longer a simple question when she stood face to face with this man, who, despite the change in both their fortunes, was unalterably linked to her life.

Euston himself, prevented by his promise to her from active agitation in the matter of his cause, had thought of nothing but Amanda during the week's time. What was she doing at Jacob Grismore's house?

No sooner did Euston meet Amanda for the hurried few moments Ware had arranged for them, than he outright put the question that had been in his mind tirelessly reiterating itself.

"You asked me to delay aggressive actions; I have done what you wished, because Grismore is to give us recognition. *Now why does he suddenly accede to a concession he has sworn to refuse? What means has worked the miracle?*"

They were walking side by side at the foot of the main street. They had taken an open road leading along

to the river bank. Amanda was ostensibly absent on a visit to a poor woman in Rexington. At a little distance Mr. Ware kept watch of the two figures.

In Euston, all Amanda's past seemed expressed to her.

She realized that his memory had been the intensest thing of these intervening years, and if she had in absence—and from the distance time creates—idealized him, the ideal was short of the strong reality! In his voice, as he addressed her, there was an authority at which she would have rebelled if she had not cared for him more than she knew. What could she reply? His face, as well as she could see, was grave; his emotion at her presence (which she was not to guess), made him cold to her. She felt it, and, notwithstanding its cause, was pained. She said slowly, choosing her words:

"I seem to have a civilizing effect upon Mr. Grismore. One does not always recognize facts in one's environment—it needs sometimes an outsider to present them."

Euston interrupted her.

"A woman can have but one real influence on a man! any other sensation is incapable of compelling a man to do what he doesn't want. . . ."

In dread lest he should pursue the subject, she said: "I came to Rexington to fetch him a message from Mrs. Morgan. I have stayed longer than I wished, hoping to be of some good. Don't you think that under the very roof of the man who controls the lives of my people—I can perhaps have some influence . . . ?"

Jealousy is as ready to seize at a reason for its non-existence as it is to take fire in the first instance. And Euston, knowing he had no right to question or forbid, said simply:

"It is, of course, not my affair. You know I despise the man—I hate to have you in his atmosphere; but you have asked me to wait until you bring some powerful issue—I have promised."

No doubt she was to marry Mr. Grismore. Unable to endure the thought of her in such relationship, he

stopped short in his walk as though the interview were at end.

His manner was such that Amanda was frozen. He had gone far from her in these years! The fact that she was to return thus unstrengthened to that house—and to Grismore's detestable presence sickened her.

"I leave Mr. Grismore's in another week, then I shall be quite free."

Her expression was unfortunate. Euston caught it.

"Free? From what?"

"Free," she answered quickly, with feeling unmis-takably real, "from the contact of a man whose character I abhor. But how callous you would think me—how hard-hearted I should be—if I came back here indifferent to all I see and know! To help the cotton-spinners you have given your life. Is it too much for me to give a fortnight for their sakes?"

He felt reproved.

"But you say such strange things," he interrupted. "The limit of time—why two weeks? And if it is a bargain, as it sounds, what are its conditions?" He stopped; he had no right to thus rush on into her life.

Her knowledge of Mr. Grismore's sentiment embarrassed her here; she could not speak frankly, and he was conscious of it.

"I put a limit on my stay because I have other plans. I shall perhaps go to Ireton to work there; I have wondered whether I could go into the mills as an operative."

Euston smiled, despite his strange humour.

"You—a mill hand again!"

"I don't know what will be best. I want to talk with you; you will advise me."

"Why do you choose Ireton?" And even as he said the name its owner came vividly to his mind. Ah, rich manufacturer! In an instant with one of those remarkably dull visions passion is famous for—he saw a romance. "Oh yes," he exclaimed, then hurried. "It is a splendid mill, and Ireton is a splendid fellow; there will be no better adviser than Ireton himself." He put

out his hand as though in good-bye. "I must go, Amanda, and it is unwise for you to come here like this, you know; you must not, for all reasons."

She was hurt; she was suffering under his unexpressed suspicions, which she could not understand.

"You mistrust me." She coloured deeply. "I don't know why you should; perhaps you even distrust my motives." Her eyes actually filled with tears. "What can I do to prove my good faith, Henry?"

He made no answer, and the river at their side in the silence spoke madly for them. For the man its voice of tempest was a fitting expression. Never in his life had he seen the like of this fair, lovely woman, whose life was so strangely linked to his. Even in this distance, in the relationship by a tie that forbade a nearer, she seemed to him to be his.

"The river is quite mad to-night," he said, and his voice was gentle. "It is higher at this season than in fifteen years; that was before we knew each other."

She exclaimed, wide of his remark: "Do you mean you won't let me work with you, Henry?"

"I mean,"—his voice was slow, very slow, for the rein of control held it now—"I mean you ought not to be here at all. How can you work with me? I am an outcast—a marked man." He was about to say, "And how can you remain when you are at Mr. Grismore's?" but he refrained.

Mr. Ware was slowly coming toward them.

"A woman has a right to devote herself to philanthropic work," Amanda hurried. "I am serious, determined. You shall see! You think fortune has altered me; you think me proud and spoiled, no doubt. You shall see. If you won't help me to help them, I shall work alone." As he still made no response, she repeated softly, "You think me then so changed, Henry?"

"Yes," he exclaimed brusquely, "you are, thank God!"

"Ah, then, for that very reason," she said triumphantly, "if you think fortune has saved me, as I see

you do, body and soul, *shall I not do what I can to help them?* ”

Her voice was soft with the birthright of all Southern voices. It had a swing and sway; it made him think of the wind in the trees, the summer wind. He could listen to it for ever as it pleaded at his side.

Mr. Ware joined them; he spoke to Euston with great courtesy and friendliness, but Euston saw them go away together with a feeling of anger and impotence such as he had never known.

He turned from them to continue alone his walk along the Bye. How much he had crushed down and out! It is said that men do not eradicate hereditary passions. In his case it had looked as though there were glorious exceptions to that rule! It was twelve years since he had tasted a drop of liquor. Up to the present he had been absorbed, amalgamated with the people and their cause. But the inertia of the past days, when his projects were all held in abeyance because of his promise to Amanda, argued ill for him. He was fatigued, overstrained, restless, nervous, his mind at loose ends.

As he walked along, his head bent, his brows contracted, for the first time his balance was seriously disturbed. He understood himself and his character; he had reason to, God knows! The past, full of Amanda, combined with this dangerous present, crowded upon him, and he took up his sensations from the day when they parted at the new shanty buildings. Why had this new temptation come to him? What could it bring? If she were not to marry Mr. Grismore or Ireton (and either case was possible), what could their intercourse be but a mistake? Euston had not to learn at this late hour that he had attraction for women—the power that stirred the mass was alike potent with the individual. His magnetism and charm made him sought in spite of his poverty; but that he could be—to Amanda—changed as she was, removed as she was by her fortune—anything of sentimental interest he was wide of imagining.

Here he left the river bank and struck across the meadows toward his lonely barracks, where a single light shone in the window. As he walked he recalled the night in Henchley's shanty long ago when he had actually held this lovely woman in his arms, and kissed her, and, wonder of wonders, she had returned with all her soul his embrace. As his strong, vibrant imagination went daringly back to the sensation, it seemed as though he held the soul of the woman still. Is it possible to give so much and take it back irrevocably? There is a wide abyss between sixteen and thirty—in her case a generation. Rubbish! he was mad! If she sought him it was only the noble nature he knew her to possess seeking to aid and relieve wrongs she remembered.

He had reached his door, within it Falloner was waiting. His presence was a relief to Euston, who welcomed him warmly. After a brief conversation Falloner said:

"You-all bettah run up North for a spell. Thar's a po'ful deal of discontent about; the hands is swearin' against the Union. They wuz all set to strike, and now you calls 'off.'"

Falloner's chief had thrown himself in a chair; his eyes were unusually brilliant, his cheeks flushed. The foreman observed him, not without anxiety.

"Then, tew, Grismore is set on your gettin' out of REXINGTON. It's a loose-lawed State, Henry——"

"My dear Falloner," said his friend, "are you serious? Do you know me so little, or love me so much, that you are more for my skin than my principles? If the hands are disaffected, we will put that straight. It's a good sign. For once let us show the public that Labour men do not force strikes on apathetic operatives. I am delighted; they shall now demand their own strike. As for Grismore"—he laughed—"if he wants to murder me, he shall have plenty of chances."

Falloner drew his chair close to Euston, and looked steadily in his eyes. He did not need to speak.

The other returned his look quietly; the fire that leapt

and burned in Euston's eyes was warm enough, but it was not the fiend Fallonier feared.

After a second, in which the chief had undergone the silent, affectionate scrutiny, he put his hand on Fallonier's knee.

"That's all right, old fellow. I told you once that I should never drink as long as I live. Don't worry; I shall not drink—and live. . . . You left your banjo here last time; get it—play something, will you? Those old things you used to sing . . ." And he paused.

Fallonier had taken his instrument, and his work-scarred hands picked lovingly at the strings.

". . . To the Henschley girls?" Dex finished calmly. "Poor little 'Manda!" It was a by-word with him; if he had said it once he had said it twenty times a year. "I'd give ma skin to know she's well 'n' happy!" In his pleasant tremolo he hummed:

"I loved her young, 'n' I loved her old;
I'll follow, I'll follow, and tell her so."

Chapter XIII

MR. WARE sought Amanda at Mr. Grismore's house, and found her sewing in the library, to which he was given instant admittance.

"Euston writes me that he must go through the Crompton Mills. He says the people are disaffected, and it is important he should show himself among them. You see, he puts himself in my power, and in my hands." Ware took a letter from his pocket, and turned it over; he was troubled.

She put out her hand for the letter with eagerness.

"You won't refuse him, Mr. Ware?"

"I am Mr. Grismore's servant," he said simply, "and I should consider such a thing a shocking piece of treachery."

She opened the letter and read it, her face showing marked excitement.

"You are quite right. It would be dishonourable. You have already been patient with us." (Us! She linked herself completely with the antagonists.) "In fact, this letter is not for you; it is for me; I can tell by the wording. Mr. Euston knows I will find means to do this for him."

Ware shook his head.

"He has supposed from my appearing with you now several times that I am friendly to the Union. Euston would not apply to a woman like you to aid him in a dangerous scheme."

Ware was accustomed to her enthusiasm. A new plan, a point gained, a step advanced, threw her lively responsive nature into an agitation agreeable to watch. The quick colour that dyed her fairness like a rose, the

darkening of her eyes till their blue-gray hue was black—all were familiar to him. She was now most keen and alive.

"Is it dangerous, then?"

"Eminently; if Mr. Grismore knew of his presence on his ground his life would be cheap."

She drew her brows together, and Ware said:

"He must not be permitted to come here."

She was silent for a moment, then said appealingly: "You will, out of friendship for me, remain neutral? . . . Mr. Ware, you will not oppose me?"

"What are you going to do?"

"I shall take him through Crompton to-night myself——"

"Oh, you are mad," he exclaimed. "I certainly shall, and do, oppose!"

She smiled.

"No, I am quite sane, as you will see."

"He will be recognized."

"I think not. Last week it would have been impossible. As it chances, every overseer is new in Crompton since yesterday. And as for the hands, he has nothing to fear there. Moreover"—she clasped her hands, the letter in them—"don't you see it is the only thing to do? With me, going through Crompton as my guest, he will be quite safe. Mr. Grismore dines in . . . and will not be back until nearly morning. It all falls wonderfully well," she said with enthusiasm, "and I am so glad I can serve him."

As Ware remained discouragingly silent, she added: "It will be useless to try to dissuade me. You see what he says—if you cannot aid him, he will go through unaided. You do not know Euston. . . ." And when the words were out she realized they said a great deal! But she was considering the letter, her eyes following every line with the deepest interest.

"He writes well,"—her voice had an accent of pride—"a clever hand, too; don't you think so, Mr. Ware?" It was the first writing of Euston's she had ever seen.

But her former remark implied too much for Mr. Ware to let it pass.

"You say that I do not know Euston, and you spoke as if you did; but it is quite impossible. What do you know, Miss Morgan?"

When Ware came in Amanda had been sewing a little print dress for a child. She now went on with her work for a few seconds without speaking; then she said:

"Mr. Ware, I have long thought I should like to tell you something. You will respect my confidence. It will help you to understand me, and to better aid me one day when I may need you."

She need him! His face glowed.

"You may count on me."

"I do."

She drew a deep breath, dropped her work in her lap, her hands on it, and turned for a moment away, looking out of the window to the garden.

"I don't know whether or not you have heard any rumour about me or my life, but I am of the people. I was born a white-trash child in a cabin in the backwoods. Later I was a cotton-mill hand—over there, in Crompton."

She bit her lips. The reality of it, the great difference of it all, was a marvel to her even now. For a moment she passed her hands across her eyes as though to hold the scenes until she could depict them.

"I have spun from dawn to night, from night till dawn. I have gone nearly naked, shivering in the winter and burned in the summer. I have been hungry and tired, and bowed with toil. I am part of this fabric, of the warp and woof. I am the fibre of these creatures you have seen me weep over. Fate, or God, as you like, has seen fit to ransom me."

The priest was marvelling at her beauty, enhanced as it was by her emotion. Her lips were scarlet, like berries in the snow, her eyes humid.

"I knew Henry Euston then," she continued, "when I was a little spinner and he was a weaver at the old

looms Mr. Grismore has so greatly improved. I knew Henry Euston, and”

Ware interrupted excitedly: “How marvellously strange! I knew him then, too! I knew his wife; her name was Lily Bud. . . .”

“She is my sister,” said Amanda.

Then in a flash Ware recalled his visit to Crompton, and his first knowledge of the Eustons. He seemed to hear again the drawl of the coarse, sickly woman at the mill boarding-house.

“Ih suttinly dew get et hayrd. Ih suttinly hev got the devil of a sistah. She done like tew kill me, yes, suh; ‘n’ she’s boun’ fer tew git ma hushan’ away from me.”

This was the devil of a sister! To flee this girl’s toils the celibate priest had advised the Eustons to leave Crompton.

In order to control her emotion Amanda resumed her sewing, her head bent low over the child’s dress. This explained it all; to Ware it told volumes.

“What you tell me is beyond words to believe,” he said earnestly. “I thank you for your confidence. I look at you in amazement. God has dealt wonderfully with you. You should consecrate yourself to Him, Miss Morgan.”

“You don’t wonder at my interest in the mill?”

“I wonder the more! Most women would have shaken the cotton from their skirts and never have returned.”

Amanda said: “Anything but that! All I have been and enjoyed—and it has been much—I can forget and put from me—all, everything but what lies about us just here. The mill called me, and I heard it in my sleep.”

Mr. Ware thought he knew better, and that the summoning power was other than the vibration of electricity and steel. He rose in his agitation, his eyes bright, his cheeks actually reddening.

“What a wonderful history!” he exclaimed, and looked down at the recounter. She bent over her work, her breast heaving, her eyes full of tears. They fell. She raised the little print frock to wipe them away.

Then, choosing the moment whose like might never be his again, he said softly:

"What can you not do? What do your life and example not teach? . . . Think of the women you can save and snatch from wrong, the influence you can have——"

Tact, delicacy, that made him always successful in his relations with Amanda, kept him from speaking of her sister.

"I do think of it," she said softly.

He stopped in his nervous walk in front of her. She lifted her face from her work, and put up her slender hand to him.

"And you will help me, won't you?—I need to be shown the way myself—you know—I am a barbarian, too! I have only been civilized twelve years!"

Chapter XIV

THAT selfsame night Euston joined his patroness at the door of the new Crompton. The temperature was stifling; without in the darkness it registered 96°, and within the mills it was well to forget the mercury's height. The spinners were garbed as lightly as compatible with decency,

"I could not disregard your peremptory note," Euston said to Amanda. "I have come thus far in accordance with your directions, but I cannot say I approve." He was in evening dress; and it was not singular that he took sincere pleasure in the approval of her eyes as they rested upon him.

"You have been my guest at dinner," she whispered; "a Northern manufacturer, and naturally curious to see the greatest mill in the South. In Mr. Grismore's absence I shall do the honours; if you can trust your men, there is no possible danger. The night overseers are new. I know," she emphasized, "because I am at present mistress of the mills!"

She smiled, and lifted her hand with pretty gesture.

"Listen: that is the new Crompton. We do not know its voice—you and I!" The blast of heat from the interior came in gusts through the open door near which they were standing. "Come!" She led the way before him into the mill. Over this entrance might well be written:

"ABANDON HOPE, ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE."

The superintendent, rising from his desk at sight of the new-comers, greeted Amanda with no surprise at the unusualness of the visit. He saw them go slowly up the

stairway, and returned to his ledgers. Crompton was weaving that night for China—with not a second's time to lose.

In the weave-room Euston whispered, below the clamour of the looms: "Talk to this guide of ours a little, will you? I want to go to that group of men—unobserved if I can. They are not dressed to receive visitors."

They were nude to the waist. He went quickly across to them, and over the shoulder of a haggard, sunken-eyed youth, he said: "Don't seem to know me, Prangle, but I am here. Tell the boys so when you can. I have come to give you courage, my man. Come if you can with the old crowd to the Barracks to-morrow; Grismore has granted us Recognition. It is the beginning of the beginning. . . . That's a Grainger loom," he said aloud, as the inspector slowly came up to his side. "I know the make. Pretty machinery," he nodded.

The eyes of the weaver Prangle turned to him; the group of men not unnaturally looked up from the yards of drilling, greeting in their eyes which no one but the chief perceived. After he had passed, the weavers attacked their task with renewed ardour.

As Euston rejoined Amanda he saw that she had paused beside one machine in the centre of the room. Before the great roller, turning off its hundreds of yards of spotless cloth, stood the controller of the senseless machinery in the form of a little boy whiter than the fabric he wove. His trousers were a network of holes; his face was like a death's-head; his thin body, naked to the waist, resembled a shell—frail substance to encase a human soul! and down his sides streamed the sweat in rivers running dirt. Close to him Amanda saw his heart beat, beat against his ribs as he tugged at his crank, drawing it aside to bend over his task. She said to Euston:

"This is the son of Mrs. Conrad—*Pauley*, is his name; he is ten years old."

Under the child's fingers the textile ran out with no

blemish. In the cotton-filled atmosphere, isolated from the older forms, he seemed the epitome of the whole infant tribe of slaves. Just the age permitted by the limit of the law, and the son of a widow who needed the fruits of his toil. Who should forbid him the privilege?

Amanda looked to see the cloth run blackened, tangled, as it unrolled. It should be stained crimson until it became an exposition of the sacrifice of life involved in the making of cotton stuff.

"This goods," said the boss practically, "is going to China to-morrow night."

"To a heathen country," emphasized the visiting manufacturer.

The guide looked at him keenly, for his implication was plain.

With a gentle gesture Euston put the little weaver aside, and (for the desire was strong in him—filled as he was with memories of the past) he seized the spun-out shuttle, drew it forth, replaced it like lightning with a full one, and sent the fresh yarn skimming through the woof, set the "side" in motion by a jerk of the crank, then drew back, and with pardonable pride watched the weaving. His gesture revealed the skilled expert. Amanda grew cold with fear, and the boss stared at the guest in astonishment. But Euston laughed easily, and said:

"Expert? I am one. In order to be a successful manufacturer a man should be a practical one."

And the man said, with a grin: "I don't guess Mr. Grismore can weave any!"

In spite of the fact that Amanda's youth had been defiled by this atmosphere, it struck her none the less forcibly this night. In the speeding-room, by the side of a young woman who might have been herself, she felt, as she watched the familiar process, the old fatigue run through her body. Her arms grew lame as, fascinated, she followed the constant mechanical gestures of the machine. In this night turned to day she felt that she herself should be at work again, and the desire in her

too, was strong to seize the speeder, to work by the girl, and to prove her sisterhood with the woman, who, unconscious of the lady's sentiments, gave one sullen look at her fresh exquisiteness, and moved as if in revolt further down the aisle.

The boss asked Amanda if she did not mind the noise. She smiled as she answered him, looking at Euston and not at the questioner.

In the spinning-room on the night-shift there were so many children that one might have mistaken the place for a kindergarten. Up and down the passages where Amanda lifted her skirts from the foul floor the little figures kept their interminable march with cruel regularity. Threads snapped and severed. Threads ran out, and small fingers retied them. Little hands trembled so that the slippery, elusive cotton escaped half a dozen times, but up and down, up and down, the bare-footed, ragged little objects kept their parade.

Through their disordered hair they peered ghoulishly at the man and woman who had come, apparently curiously, to observe their slavery. Into the fetid, sickening heat they had turned at nightfall, when happier children are asleep in their beds. Here to labour they had come to remain, whilst the stars glowed and waned—until morning, stealing over river and valley, looked in through the myriad windows of the mill on children spinning at the looms.

Neither Euston nor Amanda stopped to speak to the little things. It was useless.

"It makes me think of Milly Jones. Do you remember her?"

Euston smiled.

"Yes. Would you like to see her again?"

"*Milly!*"

He nodded to the figure of a tall girl sweeping the first aisle. Thin as the broom she wielded, she came slowly down the alley; one cotton sleeve was pinned across her breast. With the other hand she swept, not

too deftly, the filthy floor. Amanda felt the tears rise as she looked at her. He wondered if she could control her emotion sufficiently to speak to her.

"What is your name?" she asked softly.

The girl's fine, dark eyes, melancholy as an animal's, looked up with interest.

"Milly Jones," she answered, as she had answered years before to Mrs. Grismore.

Amanda let her compassionate look go deep into those fathomless eyes. If she could awake memory, she would declare herself without hesitation! But Milly only saw a figure too strange to connect with anything in her sordid existence.

"Are you well and strong?"

"Well, no, Ih ain't fer tew say."

"Do you work all night always?"

"Ih suttinly dew. Ih done been on the night shift ever since Ih was a little gyrl. Reckon Ih couldn't sleep now 'cept in daytime."

"And you have a family?"

A dull flush stole over her thin cheeks. She moved her broom.

"My family's all dayde," she said shortly, and turned way, hostile, to Amanda's grief and surprise. But Euston said:

"Don't ask her any more questions. This is one of those many lives into which it is as well not to inquire. We must go."

To the overseer Euston said: "I shall thank Mr. Grismore for his courtesy in allowing me to see Crompton. It is a very modern and interesting mill."

Chapter XV

FROM the library window of Mr. Grismore's house Amanda watched the approach of Euston's committee, to insure whose recognition she had immolated herself for a fortnight. Led by Fallonier, a handful of operatives in their best clothes crossed the lawn, came up the path, and slowly mounted the veranda steps; then the front-door was opened, and they were lost to her sight. She would have given much to assist at the meeting behind the closed doors of her host's study. She could fancy the simple, embarrassed phrases of the cotton-spinners touchingly at disadvantage before sarcastic pomposity. Her heart went greatly with these people—her own—whose natures and needs and characteristics she understood. She would have inspired them if she could, but felt herself in need of inspiration and courage, and terribly alone.

Mr. Ware, several days installed at Penvallon, had written fully; dwelling at length upon his interest in his new promising parish, his need for labourers. He thought of applying to the House of Deaconesses for a woman's aid for a time. Was it a good idea, etc.?

Since his departure Amanda, more than ever ill at ease in this house, found the environment a garment of palpable discomfort in which she could not breathe, and from which she longed to escape.

Her maid, a middle-aged French woman, was all the protection and companion a servant could be—in this case far from sufficient.

The interview, short and perfunctory, came to an end, soon even to Amanda, who waited with impatient interest. Nominal concession though it was, it signified for the labourer an enormous step toward emancipation. In

Grismore's eyes it had slight value; however, the point he had yielded nettled. He had been drinking, and received the awkward, timid men with bad grace, galling condescension, and cut their visit as short as possible.

When they shuffled finally out of the hall and door, it was with an undefined, embarrassed sense of defeat. Six of them, silent, impressed by the weight of their office, they slouched out into the late afternoon sunlight that had slipped from the snowy pillars of the veranda's colonial porch and lay a golden mantle across the lawn, enveloping the figures in their homely garments as they passed out of the grounds.

Mr. Grismore came directly into the library.

"By George! that's over. It was a dose!"

He crossed the room to where Amanda stood, her eyes on the departing mill-operatives.

"Bad tobacco—dirt—the study smells like a byre! I opened all the windows." . . . He nodded at her an unmistakable approval of her appearance. "Well, I've received them, little girl—I've received your committee! They're 'recognized'—that's their word. A month ago I'd have said, 'Much good may it do them!' Now," he added with graciousness, "*I can't say that any more!*"

Amanda was hatted and veiled. She drew on her gloves and buttoned them.

"Where are you off to, all dressed up so fine?"

"To supper at the parsonage in Rexington."

His face clouded.

"It wasn't in the bargain that you should dine out every night and spend every day at the mills."

She answered coldly: "There was no embargo laid on my time . . . that I remember."

Grismore exclaimed in a suffocated voice: "What an iceberg you are!" He advanced quickly to the window, where she stood, and made a barrier of himself so that she couldn't come out into the room. "Why don't you thank me, instead of freezing me?"

She replied with a gesture of annoyance: "You have

done a decent, civilized thing; it should be its own thanks. It's not a personal matter between you and me."

"There you are wrong," he said shortly.

"Please let me pass, Mr. Grismore. I must go; it has struck six."

" . . . There you're wrong," he repeated, "This Recognition can be a sinecure; demands will follow it. I foresee them: cut in hours, increase of wages, more hog-wash about child-labour. They'll ask me to curl the mill ladies' hair by-and-by, and brush the gentlemen's silk hats," he sneered.

Observant of her mounting colour and flashing eyes, he altered his tone. "Why don't you ask me what I mean to do for my hands?"

"I hope you will do the generous thing!"

He threw his head back, laughed, then brought his excited look full upon her.

"I'll do just what you want me to, Amanda."

Although he did not actually touch her, she felt herself polluted. She remembered with sudden disgust a certain scene in her past—Bachman—the hot forenoon at the mill. That brute had fastened his gaze on her just as this brute now sought her eyes with his! She tried not to show alarm, and said steadily:

"Will you let me pass you?"

He continued stubbornly, "The future of Crompton depends on you."

"It is unfair to say so! Mr. Grismore—if you come nearer me . . . if you touch me, I will call your servants."

He drew back, clenching his hands at his side, breathing heavily.

"I'm not going to touch you. You put me at my worst when I'm with you, you're so damned proud. I can't tell you what I've come here to say. . . ."

"Don't, I pray you! I don't wish to hear it."

Her dilating eyes, her ebbing and rising colour, fascinated him. With an attempt at gentleness, he said:

"I am not going to frighten you, little girl. I want

you to marry me—that is all. You shall do what you like with my mills . . . and with me.”

With the strength of disgust her composure came back to her, and her dislike, her revolt, were too unflattering to be mistaken.

“*Marry you!* Oh, how dare you ask it!”

“Why not?” he asked roughly. “It’s an honourable proposal, isn’t it? Haven’t I got a right to a wife?”

She said in a low voice: “No, you have not! Let me go; let me leave your room—and—the house—please. I shall say things I regret. I can’t breathe.”

He laid his heavy hand on her arm.

“Come, what’s this you mean?”

“You understand me, Mr. Grismore, perfectly.”

She returned his furious look courageously.

“No, I don’t,” he answered defiantly. “What cock-and-bull story have you heard?”

“You know what I have heard.” She now threw her words at him careless of politeness or consideration. “You married one woman years ago; you deserted her.”

“Well,” he nodded, “what of that? She’s dead.”

“She was not dead when you married, falsely, another woman. You hurt my arm! . . . You made of the dearest woman on the earth a dupe—a shame. You ruined her life, and but for me—I may say it now—but for me she would have died with grief and horror. I would never have come to you, God knows, but for her sake; to bring her sacred forgiveness—lost on you! And now you have the courage to ask—— Oh!”

“You need not call,” he whispered; “there is no one in the house. You little devil!” His eyes actually burned her. “You—a low-born mill hand! a common spinner in my mills—you dare? Nothing but a beggar on my wife’s charity!”

“All that, yes!” she said defiantly, “and I dare!”

She wrenched her arm from him; she would bear the bruise for days. She was almost at the door when he caught her flying figure again.

“I won’t let you go,” he insisted, beside himself. “I

can't; you must marry me. I don't care what you are. Hark: I'll force the repeal of the Child Labour Bill; I'll make Crompton cry to Heaven, and before they can repair my evils I'll have rung blood and tears from South Carolina."

"I'm not afraid for them," she said, with fire in her cheeks and in her tone; "they can save themselves. You are neither God nor Fate. Let me go."

She was now forced to put her hand against his chest to keep him from her. To her joy, she heard a step in the hall: someone was near. His face was close to her as she cried: "Louise! Louise!" And the door near which they stood opened in the face of a French Creole girl who served Amanda as maid. Amanda advanced toward the woman, pale, shaking.

"I saw that yo' had no wrap. I done put one in the carriage; it is waiting," said the woman.

Mr. Grismore had retired to the back of the room; he was invisible. The maid, if she saw anything out of the ordinary, made no sign to that effect. She accompanied her mistress to the carriage. Then Amanda, speaking for the first time, said in French:

"You will pack my trunks immediately, and fetch my things for the night to the Parsonage. Come to me as soon as you can."

Chapter XVI

A DAY or two later, on the platform of a diminutive station in a forest clearing, an impatient man walked up and down in the evening light. A wash-out on the road from Rexington to Penvallon delayed the trains, and for twenty-four hours past none had run further than Plankville: here the express from Washington dropped Euston twenty miles from his destination. He telegraphed to Ireton Mills for a conveyance, the sole means by which he could arrive at Penvallon, and it would be two good hours before the vehicle would appear.

Euston permitted himself the luxury of smoking. In his long periods of deep thinking, in his solitude, it had become a reposeful habit, and he now lit a cigar and prepared to wait with the impatience of an overwrought man to whom unexpected change of plans means added strain.

Washington, this time, had proven a great stimulus; his chiefs were thoroughly *en rapport* with him. Contact with people in the Capital inspired and refreshed him, and on each visit a larger, a more important, following of new friends and new interests greeted him. On this occasion he had addressed a chosen audience at request of the English Embassy, who were entertaining a multi-million manufacturer, lately knighted, and whose philanthropic commercial schemes had metamorphosed a certain English factory district. But Euston, dining later at the Embassy, was once or twice suddenly conscious of the fact that to him all eyes turned, and that he himself was the man of the evening.

Whilst North he closed with a publisher for the print-

ing of his collected speeches, received a sum in advance; this, together with a substantial rise in his salary, gave an agreeable aspect to his finances.

The peaceful recognition of the Union by Jacob Grismore was a tremendous event; thus the field of the vast concerns around Rexington were peaceful. For the time Euston could turn to Penvallon and its friendly owner. He reviewed his success with no little pride.

Three days since a despatch from Falloner informed him of Grismore's reception of the committee, and the wire came like a personal letter from Amanda, whom Euston was endeavouring to forget. The very fact that his effort demanded much of his attention proved its need and the power of her attraction. This personal feeling—this sentiment which, nurtured, would mean passion (was nigh to it), had infused him with a new fire at Washington, and he had been more brilliant in consequence.

As he stood smoking, looking down the Rexington direction, the night train's whistle cut sharp on the lonely silence of the air. The engine pulled in, the cars slowly followed; a mail-bag for Penvallon was thrown out, a crate of vegetables for some lucky overseer, and one passenger descended—a lady in a dark dress, carrying a little handbag. To but one woman belonged that slender yet round form, that adorable line from shoulder to waist! She looked about her; there was little to see, and Euston's presence once remarked, she blushed scarlet, and came eagerly towards him.

As the train moved away, they greeted each other with equal surprise.

"What, in Heaven's name!" . . . Euston exclaimed.

Amanda laughed at his mystification.

"You are sorry to see me? I can't say the same, even for pride's sake. . . ."

"What are you here for, pray—in mid-country?"

"I am running away."

Despite her late embarrassment and her anxiety, she was at liberty at last. She revelled in it.

Euston looked at her laughing, whimsical mouth, with its sweet red curves and deep corners.

"Not to be mysterious," she said, "I am going to Penvallon. Mr. Ware expects me, evidently not to-night."

"I am going to Penvallon, too, in a wagon from Ireton," he said. "I will drive you over; indeed, it will be your only way to get there."

"Since I saw you," Amanda said, "I have discovered a great deal of wisdom in your remarks—in one especially, when you said a man is influenced by a woman for one sole reason. I have left Mr. Grismore's."

"I am glad," Euston spoke quickly—"very glad; it was not soon enough."

In a few words she sketched for him a little of her two weeks at the manufacturer's house. It was hard to tell the last event. She did so with anger and disgust.

"The beast!" he muttered more than once—"the animal! I would rejoice—I mean it—in his utter . . ."

"Don't," she interrupted him; "you have less cause to hate. I would be glad to see him earn his bread, as I have done—as you have done. It has an ugly ring, when you contrast his luxury with his operatives' misery, and yet, isn't it only justice? . . . He is determined to revenge himself; he will withdraw his concession at once. Now act as you will—strike when you see fit—the hands are eager, I know."

Years of ease, the habit of taking comfort and luxuries for granted, were effaced by her weeks at Rexington, the old evils crying with new voices. Grismore's callous brutality had broken the spell of fortune over her. She said warmly:

"I feel their wrongs as you cannot; you are not born as I am."

He looked in surprise.

"Why—what makes you say that?"

"Even in the old times I knew you were different; your way of talking was the first I ever heard that made

ours seem uncouth. Your gestures, manners, all showed that you were not of us. *Now* I know why: you are a gentlemen; you were one then."

Euston answered quickly: "I was born on a Western farm. I had some education; I have read a great deal. Whether I am a *gentleman* or not"—his tone was bitter—"is an open question. My mother . . ."

He paused; Amanda waited. It was the first time her name had crossed his lips aloud; he was conscious of the fact, and that it was to this woman he said it.

"Yes?" she gently questioned. "Your mother——"

"She was an angel—the most beautiful, dearest woman. . . ."

He kept his eyes on the girl, as though he challenged her to compete with the memory. They exchanged a long look. The heavenly picture of the older woman faded even to him, and Amanda's face glowed—shone through him like a star.

The sun had gone down redly, and the suffused afterglory promised to linger long in the sky. All along the horizon—dark, spire-like, rose the steeples of the pines against the glow.

"The trap can't be here for an hour or more. Suppose we sit down on the platform," he said in a voice that betrayed his emotion.

They sat down like two children, their feet hanging over the edge of the platform. Here, in voices subdued and thrilling, in the inflection tones possess when the speakers know that when one voice ceases the other will sweetly take the theme, Amanda and Euston reviewed their past.

Finally, tired of his persuasion that she would renounce her idea of living in Penvallon in the rôle of Sister of Charity, deaconess, trained nurse, Lady Bountiful, she said petulantly:

"You doubt my good faith; you are unkind as well as unflattering."

If she installed herself at Penvallon, he must see her constantly; the plan was sweet as dangerous.

"I don't doubt your good faith. No one could and know—your wonderful generous heart; but when I realize what you have been, and are—rich, free—I can't fathom your donation to the mills. And to think you are *here!*"

He gestured a little to the waste and the isolation. She smiled and laughed her quick laugh—a bird-note no sooner begun than stopped—too soon subdued.

"That is not my fault; it's the wash-out's."

"Do you mean," he continued, referring to their conversation, "the voice of the mill was really so far-reaching? It found you across the three thousand miles and more?"

She nodded.

By the time the rockaway, driven by an old negro, emerged from the woods, the evening light had died out, and the two sitting in the gathering darkness had made pace with the years that had separated them. They were no longer estranged.

Euston talked freely of his plans, his life, his present. She was under the tense excitement a woman feels when a man unburdens his spirit—permits her to come close to his ideals, to share his masculine point of view.

Side by side in the little carriage they left the open, and the darkey turned his team into the forest road toward Penvallon. The half-moon found a filtering path through the trees, and cast what light it could on the pine-needle-strewn road over which the wheels passed with scarcely any sound.

The air, full of night odours and of the pines, came to them in little fitful gusts. From time to time the old driver's voice broke the stillness as he spoke to his horses; or a whip-poor-will made shrill and clear its appeal; or a bird, roused by the passing, twittered from its nest.

To Euston it was a heavenly thing to thus ride side by side with this lovely woman, after his years of loneli-

ness and his exile from all mankind best loves. He revelled in the companionship too greatly; it was too precious, too dear to lose.

Once he asked: "Can you remember the dialect?" He longed to hear her in the dark say some of the things that would link her with the past.

After a little she said softly: "Is you-all goin' tew be quite some time tew Penvallon, suh? Ih reckon et's a mighty pretty night tew be carriage-ridin'!"

He exclaimed:

"Sweet—sweet! Oh, say more, Amanda; it makes my heart stand still."

But his voice silenced her. Its direct personality caused her to withdraw, to realize herself and him.

In the quiet that followed, her nearness to him, the languid night, his thoughts grew warm and restless.

"What a pretty hand you have!"

It lay, ungloved, on her lap.

"It was never meant to spin. I often thought it; and, you see, I was right!"

She lifted it up—the left hand.

"Gran'maw sayde Ih had a love-merridge on ma paume."

He repeated mechanically, "A love-marriage?"

He had taken the hand that had gleamed so white in the dark; he held it, palm upwards. It lay in both his like a shell.

From it he longed to drink a delicious draught. He raised it slowly. Why did she not forbid him. She did not. He put his lips on the love-marriage, and its star scintillated through him like celestial fire. She withdrew her hand. For some time he couldn't speak.

It was the girl who broke the silence; her voice was cold.

"I came from Daco with a poor, ignorant man—a savage, compared to you. We were alone together all night. I was safe with him."

She was angry with herself far more than with Euston.

"Can you forgive me?" he whispered.

"I must be sure there will be no more such pardons to give."

His face was eagerly turned towards her; she could hardly see it.

"I make no promise: I think there will be. . . ." In his profoundly moving voice he said passionately: "I have but one wish—one desire in the world . . . and you know my nature, Amanda."

Chapter XVII

SOME two hundred operatives, without warning or encouragement, arrived at dawn one morning in Pen-vallon.

They had come by train from Rexington as far as Plankville, and from there men, women, and children tramped twenty miles on foot. Euston was roused at five o'clock one morning that he might receive the miserable pilgrims.

The army clustered in broken groups a distance of some several hundred yards from the village. As Euston hurried toward them he was struck by the silence of so large a number of people. Only the plaintive crying of some hungry child, or the voice of another, high and insistent, proclaimed existence as yet not schooled by experience to hold its peace.

The little multitude was not more prepossessing than are the raw recruits from the hills. Years of toil had presented them with scant harvest. Most of them wore hats; many women boasted regulation dresses; there was even here some faint hint of finery. But the mass was dull-hued, coarse-clothed, and most pitiful were the shrunken, diminutive labourers, the little children! Wretched branches of miserable trees, it was not enough that the sap in them should be weakened by the hardships of their forebears—they must further be bound and twisted, bent and dwarfed, in the cruel bondage of toil.

Thus the band, Pilgrims of Hope, clustered at the outskirts of a new mill, in their hearts vague expectancy of better things—eternal seed, falling even on the arid soil of the desert. And if for a space should chance to

rise a trembling shoot of promise, it must die soon in the hot blight of the reality of their hopeless state.

Perceiving the eager faces turned Penvallonward, Euston's heart ached. There was not a spare bed in town, not an idle loom or frame. But Penvallon, with promise of "good conditions," had drawn from far and near all men unto it.

At sight of Euston a murmur passed over the group, but there was no welcome extended him. One man unravelled his rags from the group's edge, and, coming forward, said sullenly:

"We-all come tew see Mr. Ireton. . . . We reckon tew work tew his mills. We don't want anybody else."

Henry's face, sincere in its friendliness, disarmed his mood a little, but a woman's voice cried:

"No, suh; you-all done turn your back on us, 'n' we ain't goin' tew sweat and bleed no more tew Grismore's mills!"

It was the widow Conrad. By her side was the boy Pauley, rescued from gaol by Amanda; he was dying with consumption.

The marks of fatigue were deep on them, and the dust of the long march whitened their clothes and faces.

"Whayr's Mr. Ireton? We come to work to Penvallon."

Here the mill whistle pierced the air, and figures of the Penvallon hands filled the streets—happy men and women on their way to a more benign service than these had known!

The people stirred as if, despite fast and exhaustion, they, too, would respond and march to the looms.

Now Euston spoke in the voice that to every man and woman was familiar, loved.

"Why do you who know me greet me so?"

"We-all swore tew stan' by you, Henry, and tew strike, and you went back on tew us."

Raglin came forward, a man on the committee sent to Grismore.

"*Ih* fetched thisher lot," he said doggedly. "Et's my job."

Euston looked at him sternly. "It's a poor one, Raglin; there isn't a day's work for a new hand in Penvallon."

An exclamation like a groan ran through the group.

Raglin muttered: "Et's a damned lie! Mr. Ireton's got tew give us vittles an' roofs."

Euston ignored him, and said to the others: "I have not forgotten you. I trusted foolishly in Grismore's good faith. I hoped to gain our point by peace. I have just learned that the concession has been withdrawn. I was on my way to Crompton to you when you came. . . ." He knew it was no time now to talk to the famished creatures. "You shall have food—at once. As many houses as can shall give shelter to the women and children for the night. I will telegraph to Mr. Ireton. To-morrow meet me here at five. You will be rested. I want to talk to you."

For the night Penvallon swallowed up the vagabonds; it could not digest them. Ireton's wire to his superintendent was definite:

"Employ no discontents from other mills."

It would have taken weeks to build them shelter, and the mill was oversupplied.

The next day Euston addressed a group of people stunned by disappointment and ready to listen to whatever he had to say. *They were to return!* At Penvallon's expense they were to be shipped to Rextington . . . they were to resume the old bondage, bite the dust, only to conspue it later, mingled with gall. He was to go back with them, remain near them, and he would lead them, if they so wished, to open revolt with all the mills. The only available factories were in . . . Georgia, and at this time there were twelve thousand operatives locked out by the manufacturers.

Did they care to be shipped to Georgia? He waited the response of the human cattle; the gentle, rustic creatures

made him think of the dumb, large-eyed beasts. How meagre they were! how pale!

"Courage! . . ." he called out, and stretched forth his hands, as though he would animate them all.

One woman burst into loud weeping; she hid her face in the cotton sleeve of her gown.

"We-all come from Georgia," said a man by her side. "We had three little boys that died thayr—the fever—et's onhealthy."

A slight movement amongst the people told Euston someone was coming from the town; he knew whom it was like to be. A rustle of dress behind him, an exclamation as one or two recognized Amanda, made him turn to see her appear.

The widow Conrad ran to her, radiant.

"Seems like Crompton went tew hell when you-all lef'!" She clung to the girl's hands.

Amanda bent on her, on them all, sparkling, compassionate eyes. After a word to several of them, she stepped back to Euston. He was talking with Raglin and one or two of the men.

"You are not sending them back?"

He made a gesture which at once spoke for his reluctance and the fact.

She exclaimed: "No, no; it is too brutal, too cruel! Look at them! they are remnants of life! And the children!—keep them and the women, at least! I have money—plenty. There is clearing here; let them camp on it. Please . . ."

"It is impossible," he said gravely. "I am here on sufferance; I have no such authority. Ireton's superintendent is to ship them to-day."

"*Ship them!*" she repeated bitterly. "What terms! They are *flesh and blood!* Ah—take the responsibility! Mr. Ireton will forgive us; I know his generosity!"

Euston said quietly: "*You knew Grismore's!*"

She coloured furiously; her eyes fell.

"I made a mistake. . . . I could not make such another. Look at them with pity."

"How do I see them?"

Her lip trembled.

"Forgive me!" Then she said impulsively: "*I will take the responsibility.*"

Euston, regarding her searchingly, asked: "Do you mean to appeal to Ireton?"

Although there was in the question not more than warrantable supposition that a charitable woman might supplicate a humane man to aid her, still Amanda saw all Euston implied.

". . . Do you wish to coerce Ireton into doing what he has refused to do?"

Subtly she knew that if she answered "Yes!" she lost Henry Euston. She turned abruptly, and found that the hem of the crowd had drawn near her. Several were waiting to speak to her, to touch her, whose ministry for weeks past had been so heavenly sweet to them.

She spoke as loud as she could, and used Euston's words.

"Courage! . . . Do as Mr. Euston says. He knows best." As she called there was a sob in her throat. "They *can't* walk back." Her voice was defiant; she had yielded so much.

"The train will be able to run in three hours to Plankville. I go with them," consoled Euston.

Near her was a young woman carrying a very small child; she carried it awkwardly, as well she might—she had but one arm.

Amanda beckoned to her. The brunette creature came forward, dirty, trembling with weakness and fatigue.

"Milly Jones?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I remember you! I saw you one night in Crompton. . . You are alone here?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Amanda laid her hand on the too burdened arm. Her beautiful eyes searched the face before her with such compelling tenderness that if remembrance could be

stirred it would be drawn forth like the soul of the stream by ardent light.

"I live in Penvallon. I have a little house here. I am lonely. Will you stay with me—you and your child? I will pay you well—be a kind mistress, *Milly!*"

Whether it was the twenty-mile tramp—or the disappointment of not spinning in the new mills—or the prospect of return to degrading misery—or the salvation that suddenly dazzled her—at all events, life just then was too much for Milly Jones. She gave a cry, joy and assent in it, and fell back unconscious. Euston caught her, and Amanda took the child.

Chapter XVIII

DURING these days—whilst Amanda in her little house on the mill village street absorbed herself in philanthropics, abetted by Ireton's goodwill and stimulated by the enthusiastic correspondence passing between them—all practical and charitable on the part of the one, largely tinged with sentiment on the part of the other—during this time when he approved her methods of work and deplored her moral bias—Mr. Ware was a victim of salutary illusion: he believed he had transformed his earthly passion for Amanda into a spiritual yearning for her salvation.

When the complex situation, the fact of her antecedents, and his discovery of her culpable affection for Henry Euston were revealed to him, he fancied himself entirely exorcised from the spell which too long threatened his soul's good and spoiled his peace. The starry creature, the woman, virginal, lovely, and so like to an angel of ministration, became for him a stray sheep from his flock of souls, to be saved at all hazards from the precipice and the night.

Without doubt this last she was to him, and as undoubtedly all the former as well! But that she absorbed him to the exclusion of everything in the world: gave a vivifying ardour to existence, made him, indeed, capable of greatness—he was far from comprehending! With a wisdom (which, if possessed by more winnowers of souls, would assure a greater harvest) he refrained from attacking her—from, indeed, remotely referring to what he knew was the interest at her heart's core. He felt certain she was already a victim of conscience, and everything he knew of her argued against a brutal passion which would lead her to rob a living woman of her rights, and herself to shame.

The enthusiasm with which he took her to his priestly care, fasted, prayed, struggled for her, transfigured him. His face became saintly. The Penvallon people, benefiting by his exaltation, blessed him as he had never been blessed in his parish before.

When she sought him, as of old, with agreeable familiarity, Amanda found him stern and cold.

Her little house at one end of the mill settlement, his at the other, rarely saw an interview between these friends; and when now and then they met on some errand of mercy, his calm atmosphere, pure as unsullied mountain air, was difficult for her to breathe. Watching his untiring labour, she wondered at him, and admired him, in a measure she had not imagined the little priest could inspire, and would have rebelled had she guessed that he was warring a warfare in her behalf, and that her Angel of darkness and his Angel of light fought together on invisible plains.

Amanda, too wise or too wicked to inquire into his reasons for the change—to seem, indeed, to be conscious of any—had but one dread—lest he should do that very natural thing, speak to her of her sister.

In this way months passed, with constant visits from Euston to Penvallon, occasionally visits from Ireton to Penvallon; and the latter, if he grew more interested in Amanda, was too thoroughly a man of the world not to know his suit urged at this time would be in vain.

During the two weeks before the Rexington invasion Euston and Amanda were constantly together. On the little porch of her cottage she sat with him, a table between them, and helped him with his letters, his papers, his speeches.

There for hours they would converse with the absorption and mingled joy and interest that between man and woman means one sole thing. Mr. Ware was the only one to see, to remark, and—suffer!

In the late evenings, before Euston met with the spinners, Mr. Ware saw them pass his house on their way to the woods, where they wandered side by side for an

hour or more, Euston to return to his meetings when the day-shift was free after nine o'clock.

Sometimes they took the river-bank, and within the rector's view, for as long as he cared to watch, the figure of Euston, with its nonchalant, somewhat slouching gait, close to the figure of the woman. Thus they wandered till darkness nearly hid them, and until, to the priest's eyes, the two made one shadow.

What those hours of communion were Ware did not dare surmise; that it meant the drawing together, the irrevocable amalgamation of natures, the deepening of a love born years before, the swelling, rising force of passion, to flood-tide he feared—had reason to believe!

Once he met Amanda just after she had left Euston; as he looked at her, the priest's heart leapt, then stood still. The radiance, the softness of that face! The eyes, whose profundity seemed endless, deepening toward the heart of an eternal well, where one sole image lay clear! As she glanced at Ware some of the glory fell on him—a beggar who sees the feast through scullery doors, a starving man who must remove his eyes lest they see to crime!

When Euston returned with the band of mill hands to Rexington Mr. Ware offered up the most eloquent *Benedicite* in his ritual.

Then for days and weeks he, as well as Amanda and all Penvallon, were occupied with subjects of life and death; for the red plague fell on Penvallon—malignant scarlet fever.

The mills were shut down; generous sums of money from Ireton, generous donations from Amanda, pulled the village through the horror.

Milly Jones's baby had been the first to go. Amanda, weeping her heart away with sympathy, fairly tore the agonized little mother from the dead child. All the poor creature knew of joy was in the small, attenuated body. Amanda fairly carried her to her bed, cared for her, nursed her to life and animation as she had bent over her in filthy, miserable childhood years ago.

Herself too exalted to fall prey to disease, she passed from house to house immune.

Her vitality was no longer hers to command; she had become part of another life. At times her heart seemed so to inhabit another breast that she actually felt to see if any of the old-time pulse would beat under her hand.

She loved Euston.

Whether hopeless or not in the face of his marriage bond, she would not let her conscience ask; she took love in, fed it, nourished it, pressed it to her bosom, and asked no question of herself or of life.

Sometimes in the fetid closeness of a garret her eyes met the minister's over the bed of the dying; and his, burning like holy lamps fed by celestial oil, lit for her and for him the recesses of her heart.

Meanwhile Crompton became a seething mass of discontent, a hotbed of misery—became a nest of rebellion against conditions the chiefs refused to improve. Men and women shirked the schedule of time with no excuse. Children were withdrawn by the dozens from the night-shift. Mr. Grismore's enormous contracts called for the regular monotony of well-organized labour; the machinery, as was its boast, should never stop night or day.

In his house, alone now, dreadfully alone, he brooded. The face of his own affairs, personal and financial, was black to look upon. He decided that, as far as the latter were concerned, he had money enough to win. A saturnine intelligence came to him in his meditations, as he cogitated how to turn the last screw on the torture-machine at Crompton. He resolved on a *coup d'état*. When the two hundred hands returned from Penvallon, they found the Ralings Mills shut. Grismore had discharged the other nine hundred, as he had threatened at the time of the last strike; he declared a lock-out, and turned his attention to the mills on the Bye and their problems.

The shipping of . . . thousand yards of white cotton cloth to Moscow on May —, 190—, was the last contract

kept by Crompton. As on a summer night, long heavy with the promise of storm, one awakens suddenly to hear one blinding crash, and finds the tempest rushing hard and fast, so Grismore suddenly realized the state of his affairs on the day when every loom of his perfect mills was silent, and six thousand of his hands on strike.

Chapter XIX

IF Mr. Ware had been at his window this night of May, 190—, he would have seen a figure in a white dress come very swiftly from the village, past the outskirts, and disappear into the woods—a flash like a white shadow in the dark, for the night, following a day of incessant rain, was lowering and overcast.

With a beating heart and step that betrayed excitement, Amanda disappeared into the forest cover, hurrying along, looking straight in front of her, piercing as well as she might the enveloping darkness on either side. She stopped after she had gone some distance, listened, then called softly:

“Are you there? Henry!”

Almost at once the light of a cigar flickered—a firefly in the humid, sooty night—and Euston came out from the trees in the middle of the road.

Woman-like, her first words were reproof that the thing she desired was accomplished.

“Why are you here, Henry. You are quite mad. It is the height of danger, for every reason under the sun!”

Euston had taken both her hands; a grasp strong, possessive, claimed every inch of the fair flesh. He could not speak; the nearness of her, his touch of her, overpowered him.

“The fever has been terrible in Penvallon.” Her voice trembled with dual emotion—anxiety and another. “You aren’t immune! Men have died here this week. Since you wrote me to come to meet you to-night, I have deserted every fever-house like a coward! To-day I went with the women to the river and made them bathe. The air is tainted; plague and danger are heavy in it. . . . Don’t you feel it?”

He had slowly drawn her hands to him; he held them against his heart.

"I feel the first good, the first peace, since I parted from you, Amanda."

She made a slight effort to withdraw her hands, but it was quickly overcome.

"Let them lie so!" Euston pleaded; "it keeps the pulse beneath them calm."

"The fever," she went on, "is only one danger. Mr. Ireton has been forced by his colleagues to forbid you the freedom of his mills. You are not safe here; don't you realize it?"

"Your hands are on my heart; you are speaking to me. What you say matters little. I think I am safe here—nowhere else."

His voice was deep, but unsteady, and there was a new note in its timbre that caught her startled attention.

She strained her eyes in the night to see his face.

"I can't see you, but there is something wrong: it is the pressure you are under—too great by far. What terrible things in Crompton and Rexington! Henry, will they win?"

Instead of answering her, he leaned forward; she moved a little, and received his kiss on her hair.

"Please—let my hands free."

He did so, with a sigh, and said:

"If I have run the risks you name, it is hard to have no return!" He took a cigarette from his pocket. "You will let me smoke? I am horribly nervous—not myself, Amanda."

In the flaring of the match and the lighting of the cigarette she saw his face for a second, thin, pale, the eyes haunted. . . . Her heart was laid hold of by a great dread that in its sickening strength proved what he must be to her if she could so tremble for him. He answered her:

"The strain has been enormous, and it is also becoming to my thinking a question of expedient. I don't

know whether *they* will win or not—in the long run; I *think* so, but *I shall not*.”

His tone was so significant, his attitude so reckless, that she exclaimed:

“What do you mean? What has happened? You terrify me beyond words!”

Once again he repeated, as though it explained and excused:

“I am not myself—not myself.”

Seeking to explain, she said. “You are exhausted; the unnatural things around you have unnerved you——”

He put his hand on her arm gently.

“No, it is not that,” he said with hesitation; “I wish it were! It is the old enemy—allied with the new; and I have no more forces left in the field.”

His voice had lost its dominating inspiration; it faltered even in speaking to her; it caught, halted, seemed beyond his control.

She put her hand over his hand on her arm, and her cool, slim fingers found his flesh scarcely less hot than the fevered hands she had been lately feeling.

Euston went on: “For years I have been a composite life; I have been thousands of men, if you like! I have existed in others, breathed and pulsed with their lives, I may say that from the hour I swore to stand by the cotton-spinners I have not had a selfish motive. If I could, I would have worked out each man’s tale of bricks, received his strokes in his place on my own flesh. Thus my own strength has been lost, and in return I took from other men strength for my need. Pride helped me as well, will went farther still . . . and now”—he made a gesture of desperation—“the wrongs of the masses will never inspire me again to a second regeneration. I have all along been working towards one point; it has culminated. The cotton-spinner has found his soul; he will work out his own salvation. The vastness of the enterprise can no longer be a stimulus. . . .”

“And yet,” she interrupted, quite incapable of taking in the tragedy of his words, “when you left . . . you

were so inspired, Henry; you were so *inspired* for your work. . . .”

For a moment he did not answer, then said brusquely:

“I have come here to-night in secret. I have walked from Plankville twenty miles to you. I should be anywhere but here, of all places on God’s earth. Here it is the greatest wrong for me to be, and yet I have come—dragged to you, led to you, forced to you, Amanda. I am again the victim of disease—I call it disease. Perhaps no man can ever eradicate it; at all events, in my case, in order to keep the fiend under, *I must desire something else more than drink, or I am lost.*”

During his broken sentences he had found both her hands again and taken them unrepulsed; his clasp of them, his clinging to them, spoke for him as much as his words. To hear him, whose strength had seemed so Titan, speak like this, and contemplate what he meant, was agony to Amanda.

“ . . . My drift is so surely toward destruction,” he said bitterly, “that I don’t wonder you refuse to follow it! You say I was inspired when I left you? I was indeed! Your companionship, what I had grown to hope and believe of your feelings, fired me, and it is not strange; but when I got away alone, and realized how I loved you, and its hopelessness and crime, why, the very soul and heart of life died out of the world. For twelve years I have held the devil that is in me by the throat. I can’t battle at once with my hopeless desire for the woman I love—and this fury. I am going to leave the South. I shall not see you again. . . . I have come to bid you good-bye.”

He wrung the hands he held, and let them fall; he turned as though he would flee from her then.

“Where are you going?” she gasped.

She put her arm through his and held it; he felt her slender body close to him.

“Oh, out of the South first, to try a new atmosphere; and, if I find I *must drink*—then—then—on to another—and so on and on . . . !”

"No," she cried, and held him fast—"no!"

She had turned away from him a little, for she was weeping.

As soon as she could, she mastered her voice, spoke, and for the first time word of her sister passed between them.

"Where is my sister?"

"I don't know," he answered sharply. "I shall never know; Falloner takes care of that for me. She lives; she is well; and she lives in comfort. . . ."

"You are ill with excitement and overwork," she said, faltering. "Rest, a little peace, a few more quiet days on my porch at Penvallon, and you will be yourself again!"

He had nearly finished his cigarette; he puffed it hard; it glowed a scarlet, tiny lamp. Again they scanned each other's faces, and the tragedy on his, the warfare, was too plain, to real for her to do aught but catch her breath in grief.

He replied quietly: "It is better you should think so—believe it, be sure of it. The fact that I have come here and displayed this weakness is the best proof of my degradation; it will make it difficult for you to think well of me when you recall it. Good-bye."

Amanda's thoughts were in a blur; she dashed her tears away. One thing alone out of the entire universe of problems, expedients—one law alone amongst the musty files—was clear as light.

Under her breath she murmured again, "*No—no!*" and her voice quivered through him like a bell, and set his flesh vibrating.

"You care!" he said. "I know it, but not enough."

"Oh . . . far more than anything in this world."

The deep breath she drew to control her tears left her trembling like a ship in a storm. The tempest drove her to him; he caught her, and for a complete, supreme instant held her crushed against his breast. Then he set her free.

"Yes, impossible to believe as it is . . . *you care!* but

not enough! . . . There are two worlds, we are taught to believe. . . . We have souls as well as bodies."

Amanda understood the man before her. She knew she could not move him in his determination to leave the South. He would go at once, without compass, star, or chart, to utter wreck. With intuition given to women in certain crises when they are clairvoyant to the lives of the beloved, she saw more than this, a more sinister thing—that which a fluttering pink ribbon, swaying on the grass by an inland pool, had prevented years ago.

"You took a vow, Henry," she said earnestly, "to your friends in old Ireton. You have not forgotten? You promised them you would not drink while you lived."

He made no reply. His silence was to her portentous. She knew his mind and reasoning. He would never be again the degraded creature she had helped to stagger to the Henchley's cabin. He would not permit himself again to live a blot on the universe.

It had grown so dark that neither could see the other at all. A dense, ugly shroud surrounded them this night—moist, warm, clinging; in the distance, muffled, with a sullen pulse, they could hear the Bye, swollen by weeks of rain, charged by the storm, thrash its banks and tear like mad across its stony bed.

"Do you remember the night in the cabin, Henry, years ago?"

(Did he remember! He had bruised her then; he had thrown her to the ground—harmed her.)

She recalled further: "I said that night I would never let you drink. The words were forced from me; they meant a promise I am called upon now to keep. . . ."

She was clinging to his arm, her face strained up to him in the dark. Her voice, sweet and pure, gave no hint of her agitation as she said: "If I am less to you than it seems—if all of my life and tenderness do not avail . . ."

He said sharply: "Hush! what are you saying?"

"You say we are taught we have souls as well as bodies. . . . Mine is yours. If to go to you, to stay

with you, be what strength, what good I can, with all my love, and all my heart—if this will cost my future salvation, why, I pay it gladly, Henry! It is no sacrifice."

She had wound her arms about him; he removed them gently, and held her from him.

"Hush! hush!" he repeated; "you don't know what you say!"

"I will not have you lost," she said passionately; "I will not have you go without me."

"You don't know what you offer;"—his voice was scarcely less shaken than hers—"reputation, your life. . . . Free, beloved, you would sacrifice it all—be an outcast, linked to an outcast . . . ?"

"I should not feel it so."

". . . You don't know what you are offering? Food to a starving man, life to one on the brink of the grave."

"If that is true," she breathed with infinite tenderness, "I thank God for the joy of being yours."

For a long time he held her to him. Then he said slowly, as though he were measuring his rights against the world's wrongs:

"I don't pretend to comprehend the problem. Life owes me something, I think. I am basely born, and they say I have no father; existence has been one continued mental and physical agony, until you . . . came! God knows what perverted frame of mind I am in! But in the face of right and honour and decency, I can—not—give you—up. . . . I want you. . . . I adore you. . . . This means your ruin . . . and my dishonour, but I cannot give you up."

"You shall not, Henry."

"Listen, Amanda. . . . I must go now; it is late enough. On Sunday night of next week I shall leave South Carolina by the 1 p. m. express at Ralings corner. The station is empty at that time; it is a flag station, and only the signalman and an official will be there. I will be in my house until midnight. . . ." He paused.

"I will come to you there."

"I do not mean to threaten a cowardice or to alarm you for my future," he continued, as though she had not spoken. "I shall go away to do my best until the end. . . ."

"I will come to you, Henry."

"If you come . . ." he said deeply, "we will go to a new country—somewhere—and live a new life. I can write. I will make you not ashamed. . . ."

"I will come."

He made an exclamation pregnant with shame for his defeat, and of adoration for the woman. In their last moments it seemed to be she that held him, whose tenderness like an envelope enfolded him, whose kisses rained as soft as flowers upon his face. So conscious of her in every fibre of him, his senses in highest swing, he seemed to feel her still clinging to him, her kiss on his lips, her body close to him, as he hurried away through the suffocating night.

The day following her interview with Euston Amanda called to Mr. Ware as he passed her house on his way up to town. He came at once, and they stood together on her little porch talking.

"I want you to do something for me, Mr. Ware."

He wanted to do all for her; it was not difficult, therefore, to bow his head in courteous acquiescence.

"It is for Milly Jones. . . . I want you to especially befriend her."

"Befriend her?" he echoed. "Why, what better friend could she have than she already possesses?"

"You—far better. She grieves for her little baby, poor thing! and this house is full of associations. I want you to take her to the Parsonage under your gentlest care."

She was more charming, more lovely than he had seen her yet. She was still haloed by the warmth of yesterday; her beauty enriched, matured, her lips dowered with the freshness caresses give, her whole expression that of a woman who loves greatly and who is greatly loved.

There was an excitement in her, a quickness of gesture foreign to her movements, usually slow and rather indolent.

Mr. Ware said: "I think Milly needs a woman most of all with her."

Amanda did not acquiesce. (Yes, a woman possibly, but one who has a right to speak of honour, purity, and lawful union!)

"Milly is changed," she evaded—"much changed; you will see it. If you talk with her, you will find her ready to listen. I should like her to be confirmed." Her voice was subdued; she seemed to plead for his merciful judgment. "She has a lover; she has been the victim of others. Is it not too terrible?" She saw herself and Bachman as she spoke. "But this man—the father of her child . . . she loves him."

Within the house, Milly, at her work, was aiding the Creole maid; their voices were audible.

"He wishes her to return to him . . . he writes for her constantly. Whilst her baby lived I could keep her: now she is restless—restless." She chose her words carefully, as though they had a second story to hide, and must be well laid, mosaic on mosaic. "It seems he cannot marry her. . . ."

"No?" Mr. Ware prompted, for his own information, stopped.

"No," she continued slowly. "He is an overseer in Crompton—a Yankee; he has a wife in New England."

"Ah—yes!" Mr. Ware nodded, accepting the fact of Milly's tragedy as though it were the consequence of love in the case of all the women he knew.

"When she goes to you, you will show her what to do. . . ."

"You have shown her, Miss Morgan," he interrupted; "I am sure. . . ."

"I am afraid I have failed to persuade her," she said, with a slight smile. "You see, she loves him."

If the ecclesiastic saw anything in this vulgar fact, he gave no sign.

“ . . . And he wants her to go to him.”

In her white dress, her white clasped hands, whose exquisite ministry he had seen and adored, the afternoon light filling her hair lying warm on its brown, gold in its gold, she filled his vision, sensitive to all beauty. Could it be she unconsciously pleaded for herself, leaning against this Magdalen?

“And you want me to save her?” he asked gently. “I mean to say, to show her how to be saved?”

The woman answered gravely: “I want you to show her how to live without love, if you can; how to renounce and yet to live, if you can; and then”—she made a slight gesture, as though she handed to him a mission beyond her—“*comfort her.*”

Here, as though she had been conscious that the drama of her life was under question, Milly Jones came out—a new Milly indeed!—her dark hair in smooth shadow around her pale face, her dress deep mourning, priceless balm to the poor. Her wild eyes, still repelling and defiant, flashed on the priest as though she mistrusted his presence.

“Ih suttinly did hyar ma name sayde?”

Amanda put out her hand.

“Milly, Mr. Ware is in need of a good servant. Will you stay at the Parsonage a few days?”

The girl’s dark face clouded until her expression baffled any hope Mr. Ware would ever have of comforting that untutored, passionate savage.

“No, suh,” she said roughly; “Ih won’t go.”

Amanda actually blushed for her.

“Hush!” she said sternly; “you will do exactly as I wish.”

Milly seized the hand of her mistress, and clutched it to her bosom, so hard that she hurt. Her eyes, ever ready to weep these days, brimmed over.

“Ih’ll drown maself,” she said, with a gasp, “ef you-all send me away. Ef Ih’m tew bad fer you-all, Ih’m tew bad fer him.”

Amanda encircled the girl’s waist with her arm; she

drew Milly to her. In her act there was a linking of herself with the woman—a look as she raised her charming eyes to Ware which perhaps she meant him deeply to read.

The dark head of the mill girl lay pressed against Amanda's breast. She laid one hand gently on her hair, and, giving the other to Ware, with a whimsical lift of her eyebrows, and a smile which was as exquisitely sad as tears could be, she said:

"I am afraid we will have to stay as we are—Mr. Ware. I am sorry to have troubled you!"

He took her hand, and very slightly bent over it, as he said, with a comprehending delicacy that could not offend:

"Whenever she needs me I will try to comfort her."

The woman who was about to enter into an unlawful bond, so calmly and unhesitatingly to assume a shameful life, had been born of lawless people, of primitive creatures who would scoff at the metaphysician who desired to prove them not free! Whether or not her mother had conformed to the rites of Church and State Amanda could not have said; who her father was she did not know. Of religion as it is comprehended in tenet, creed, schism, doctrine, and dogma she had been ignorant throughout youth. Her grandfather had taught Lily Bud and herself their letters, and the handful of books, kept pell-mell amongst the cups and saucers, she had read and worn threadbare—Fox's "Book of Martyrs," "The Adventures of Captain Kidd," "Around the World in Eighty Days"—and this was all. Where these books had come from no one in the shanty knew, and no one but Amanda cared. Witness and participant of an illicit trade, conscious that justice like a Damocles sword hung over them all, she had been nurtured in a law-breaking midst, and raised with neither ethics nor creed. In these free-born, primitive conditions her life's flower had sprung. All she knew of mankind's civilized standpoint had been revealed to her after she had passed womanhood

—suffered, endured, laboured for her daily bread, been hungry, tired, cold, displayed in crises the qualities Christianity is taught to emulate, but, alas! *after she had learned to love another woman's husband.*

Twelve years before, Amanda of the Mill vanished, and a new creature, docile, civilized, took her place; but the hour had come when the instinct of the free-born stirred again, and Amanda of the Mill returned to claim her birthright of lawlessness and free love.

Book IV
The Deliverance

Chapter I

ELECTRICITY hung high in the middle of the mill village street, but that convenience is not the sum total of civilization. Civilization! Liberty!—words precious to modern happiness—tickets of admission given, so to speak, to the hordes of emigrants entering through the finest harbour in the world to the greatest country in the world.

Much good the cotton-mill hands reaped from it all! Perhaps, according to Grandmaw Henchley, they had “helped to civilize Mr. Grismore,” although, if he were an example of its benefits, God defend them from civilization!

Civilization—save that it forbade them to go naked, forbade them to steal time from the mills—left them as completely to themselves as if they were savages. They could fight with knives, razors, and pistols; they could lynch a negro who chanced too near their womenfolk; they could marry and give in marriage at will—one man to as many women as would have him; one woman to as many men as could survive the jealous knife of a rival.

Civilization permitted all this. Otherwise they might rot in their unsanitary hovels; they might breed and disseminate consumption by the thousands, carrying the germs from settlement to settlement. Women great with child might work until travail came on them at their spindles. The young child, with milk scarce dried on its lips, might maim its limbs and cripple its existence in the clutch of the machines. Civilization, the broad, the beneficent, permitted it all!

There had been for weeks four thousand hands without work, consequently (save for their leaders' supplies) without food. A handful of dried peas or beans, corn, meal—and little of it—was all they could count upon.

Mr. Grismore had them hemmed in.

They might not stir from the precincts known in general as Crompton. A militia at the Rextington limit kept them out from communication with the town, thus barring them out, and the Ralings people in. Behind them were the hills from which in hope and good courage they had come. To reach the mountain homes again there was the mad, inconsequent rush of the Bye to cross, and there were no boats.

The schedule presented for Grismore's acceptance was a reduction in time of labour—a tremendous demand! Euston had dared to cut off at least six hours a week from the celebrated sixty-six the cotton-manufacturer feels "*he must have*"!

At times the workman, too, feels there are things "*he must have*," but the *must* of the manufacturers and the *must* of the toiler are not synonymous!

The leaders of the Cromptonites found them singularly docile. They had submitted for years to unnatural conditions, and, confronted with their gigantic act—this mighty strike—they were dazed and stultified. They had, as it were, by their own gesture for liberty, smitten themselves to stone.

The heat was overpowering; the water they drank stank, and was nauseous to the taste.

In their blistering shanties they herded during labourless days, when the river, now that the mills were silent, sang to them its pæan of the eternity of inanimate force and the pigmy pitifulness of individual lives.

In nights no less hot than the days, fighting the vermin, they lay on their pallets in hovels which, raised on stilts from the soil, rose the ghoulish things, till the very windows seemed eyes that opened and shut, and the doors mouths satisfied with the tale of life within.

There were no drunken disturbances; no outcries. Crompton and Janet were silent cities, full of gaunt, hungry men in cotton-covered rags; of gaunt women with feverish eyes, and broods of children—bent, deformed, wasted by night and day labour—children from whom

Civilization had permitted childhood to be stolen by greed.

Thus they waited.

At first, stimulated by Euston's encouragement and his presence—for he had been amongst them in disguise—they had hoped for a complete victory; but in the fourth week, when supplies from the Union could not reach them from either North or South, when the few leaders were disheartened, the people capitulated.

Word went to Grismore that the several thousand souls of Crompton and Janet were willing to turn their bodies into the machine again, and from their wasted flesh he might grind what he could. They had failed—but it was a significant fact that no word of bitterness went up against the leaders or Euston. In a heroic manner the strikers laid down their arms, and prepared to return to the looms.

At this point was revealed to them the acme of oppression, but it emancipated the souls of the hitherto singularly spiritless tribe. Grismore and Company made it known to the strikers not only that there was no more work for them in the company's mills, but that his deviltry had reached its high-water mark at last! An importation of foreign labour was to arrive—an imported army—which should oust the Child of the Soil from his right to die at the looms of the Southern cotton-mills.

Grismore raised the lock-out at Ralings. The Ralings hands, like a lot of sufficiently-whipped animals, were bidden back to their privileges.

At the combined news a cry of wrath and hatred went up from Crompton, and the rock of riot stirred at last.

Chapter II

EUSTON, his funds exhausted—his conviction that the times were not ripe, seriously shaken by Grismore's bulldog pertinacity and inexhaustible funds, and this last unpatriotic ruse—had counselled capitulation; he found himself in the midst of a riot.

Of Crompton and its doings he knew nothing. Access to the mills for him was shut off by the militia. Indeed, he had more than he could do in REXINGTON to keep the rioters from actual warfare and bloodshed. The cotton-spinners of the town, increased in numbers by hands of the Carson City Mills, numbered more than two thousand; every soul was in the streets, and armed. The concourse, pale-faced, but dreadfully in earnest, marched like a solid wall from the edge of the town along the principal street, leaving behind them the Ralings Mills in flames. This band was headed by a seventy-five year old spinner, flanked on either side by a stalwart man armed with loaded pistols. Her head wound about with a piece of brown sacking, her face the same tanned colour as the stuff, illumined by piercing eyes, she made a suitable figurehead—bowed, emaciated, and yet unbroken by a lifetime of labour. Where she led, the timidest soul could not refuse to follow. From the windows, housed REXINGTON gazed in terror and amazement at the valiant cotton-spinners. They had been believed to be so near to the beasts, such docile slaves! Now that they were started on a violent way, for the moment, at least, they turned against Euston, who in vain tried to make himself heard. They knew his speech to be pacific, and they had no wish or inclination to listen to peace. Bent irrevocably towards Mr. Grismore's distant house, they were deter-

mined to wrench by force what humanity had refused to their demand. With the crowds officers, citizens, and firemen mingled, until the mass became a dense honey-comb of human life. In the crush Euston felt himself pulled by the arm, and he turned to see a man whose face was familiar, but whom he could not at once place.

"Step with me into Pierce's grocery, will you? I've got a message of great importance."

Pierce, a friend of the Union and a supporter of Euston, seemed to have sprung up miraculously at demand, and the three men made their way out of the throng into the little shop.

The messenger was none other than Bachman, now Grismore's confidential man. Euston had not once been with him face to face in all these years. Bachman insolently regarded the man whom he had last known as an inebriated weaver; but if he had any impertinence at his tongue's end with which to greet the Labour leader, he did not give it utterance. People were not generally inclined to insult Euston to his face.

As he handed him a letter, Bachman said:

"It's from Mr. Grismore; there's no answer."

"Wait." Euston tore it open. "There may be."

But the overseer replied that if there were, *he* had no time to take it.

"I've nothing to do with it, anyway. I've been after you for days trying to give to you. I'm off to the railroad to look up the hands shipped from New York."

Euston smiled.

"Look after them," he said quietly; "they will need it."

Bachman, breathless, as was everybody on this afternoon, slipped out without bidding good-day to Euston, saying to Pierce:

"Just let me out the back-door will you? I don't care to be a target for those damned animals."

Euston opened the envelope; he was alone.

Pierce's back-door took long to open and to safely bolt and bar. The grocery, shut in by drawn shutters and

double door, was dark, and fragrant with apples and the agreeable odours of clean staples. There was hardly enough light to read the closely-written note. Euston went toward the window, as close as he could to the cracks in the shutters. Without, the dull, ugly sounds of the raging crowd came to him, as well as the roar of the factory in flames. In the note which he opened was a bit of paper; it fell rustling to the floor.

"Since you place your services at money value, defrauding my hands of their living, drawing on their funds, and filling your pockets as well from your chiefs, I am going as a last resort to try and buy you off. I don't like sedition and riot and incendiarism. I am a citizen in a country to whose wealth I add. If you will take this sum of money and clear out of the State, I will try to effect what peace I can with my hare-mad employés.

"And if you will swear on oath to me never to cross the State border, I will cut my hands' hours to sixty a week, and raise their wages five cents on the dollar. Now cash this cheque and get out. "JACOB GRISMORE."

Euston stooped, and picked up the cheque. He unfolded it slowly; it was for twenty thousand dollars. Across the top of the paper the engraving of the bank—an old-established banking firm in New England—seemed to swim in a sea of lithographing. Euston held the film of paper out before him, transfixed it as though his eyes would sear it like flames until it perished from existence. He read the figure—the date—the quick, nervous signature which might impress itself on the mind for ever without being intelligible. Finally a gray, like the paper's, settled over the man's face. He shook as though in a palsied dream. At the sound of Pierce's entrance he thrust the letter and the cheque in his pocket. Pierce was in a state of great excitement.

"By——! the Crompton hands are all on march to a man across country! They tell me they are going to burn Grismore to the stake. Now, the stuff is to keep the Rex-

ington people back. For God's sake, Mr. Euston, what's the matter with you? There ain't a drop of blood left in you, suh. Just let me get you a little brandy. . ."

Euston gave a little laugh, low and hardly pleasant to hear. He leaned hard on Pierce's arm.

"No," he said—"no *brandy*. That would be the last line of the drama . . . and it is too soon for it."

He moistened his lips, still leaning against Pierce, as though he would take force from him. Then he said:

"Now let me get out in a second's time; there is none to lose. This way—by the front-door please—right out into the heart of the crowd."

Chapter III

THE hated foreigners were destined never to weave at Grismore's looms. Crompton prevented them.

Every man and woman young enough, vigorous enough, was on the march to Rexington via the Grismore place. What they meant to accomplish there even the maddest of them did not say aloud.

En route they destroyed the railway-track over which the Seaboard should fetch the imported operatives. The women were the fiercest; perhaps because their toiling condition was the more unnatural their reaction was in consequence the greater. They cheered the men, who tore at the rails with crimsoning hands.

Short work was made of miles of rails and tracks; sleepers thrown into the river floated down to tell Rexington how things were going at Crompton.

Arming themselves with what bits of iron they needed to complete arms already sufficient, the Cromptonites marched on. The souls Euston had awakened were ferocious. Protection, self-preservation, declared themselves to be laws, and the natures that responded were like the beast.

The outburst at Rexington had preceded this. At noon on Sunday Jacob Grismore had learned that the Ralings Mill was in flames, and his hands, instead of returning to the work he had magnanimously restored, were a mob of belligerent strikers. He was advised to remain at home, not to show himself out of his grounds: he would be literally torn to pieces. It was useless to look for civic protection. The fire at Ralings threatened to set a torch to the clustering town, and all hands were fighting the flames. A strong guard had been required at the city

limits to anticipate a march in that direction from Crompton, and the remaining militia was in no wise sufficient to keep at bay the strikers, who were armed and utterly without fear.

All of this was telephoned to him at different intervals during the day, and he had gone from window to window looking toward Crompton, expecting at any moment to see those mills in flames.

Of the marching avenger he had received no word. The column of smoke from Ralings, billowing against the sky, made him swear deeply, but as long as Janet and Crompton stood firm he could pull through. He was utterly alone to face the crisis and imminent danger—he fully recognized it. There was not a servant in the house; every man and every woman had taken to their heels. He saw to it that windows were bolted; as he closed the last he shut out the roar of the flames and the distant shouts. He loaded his pistols, put cartridges by them, got a bottle of brandy, drank a glassful, and began to pace the floor up and down in the stifling heat. He had plenty of time in his agitation to realize how alone he was, how deserted. No one for gold to lend him aid, and certainly no one for affection. Late in the evening his telephone rang.

“Mr. Grismore—arm yourself! If you can slip out of your house, do so. We have been trying to get a posse out to you. . . . They tell us the hands from Crompton are on the way to burn your house.”

Grismore called back: “That’s all right; I am not afraid . . . Call me up later, and see if I am alive.”

He was a brute, but no coward. Before he could decide whether or not to endeavour to make his escape, as he walked slowly through the rooms toward the kitchen, a loud shout made him pause. His name was being called at the kitchen door, and someone was knocking furiously on it.

“Who is it?”

A single voice replied: “Let me in, and be quick about it.”

"Who the devil are you?"

"I have come to save you, if I can. Let me in."

Grismore had heard the voice before; he would never forget its character—vibrant, compelling. He swore deeply.

"No, by God! and if you don't get out I will go upstairs and shoot at you from the upper window."

"You are mad!" the voice cried. "A thousand hands are coming from Crompton. They will be here before you can make ready for them."

He cried this out pantingly; he had run miles. Grismore could hear his labouring breath.

"Well," returned the other calmly, "it's your . . . work, sir. I hope you're satisfied."

"Let me in!" repeated the man.

Now the manufacturer heard a distant shout hoarse and loud; it was an accumulated voice, and its significance he doubted not at all.

Euston, pounding on the door, cried again: "Let me in, if you value your life!"

"Not at your hands," returned the manufacturer stubbornly.

Then Euston struck the door again, and said in shaking tones that were loath to come:

"In the name of Elizabeth Penryn . . . open the door! . . ."

A pause followed, then the key turned, the door opened, and Euston, about to enter, was seized by his shoulders, and fairly torn from without into the kitchen. So sudden and violent was Grismore's gesture that Euston staggered and nearly fell. Grismore locked the door, and turned furiously on the intruder.

"*What do you mean by using that name?*"

He saw before him a man over whom as though all the billows of disaster had passed, and thrown him a wreck upon the shore—a man pale as the dead, out of whose haggard face burned two brilliant eyes. Hatless, his dress disordered, red with dust, his left arm bound to his side by a blood-stained bandage, he presented more

the appearance of a refugee and criminal from justice than a saviour. He was breathing heavily, and did not reply to the question. He moistened his lips.

"Come"—he evaded, "never mind that now. . . . We must save you—if we can."

Grismore took up one of the loaded weapons from the table.

"I warned you the next time you came here to come prepared. You tell me what you mean by the name, and when you have finished I intend to put a pistol in your hand, and you can defend yourself. I'll show you to your friends when they come, sir—if I'm alive."

Euston leaned heavily upon the kitchen table with his uninjured hand.

"You had better shoot now," he said quietly; "it will be less of a crime, perhaps. At any rate, I will not defend myself."

"Come," said the man imperiously, "where did you hear that name?"

"It was my mother's name."

And Grismore lifted his arm with the weapon in it as though he would fell the speaker to the earth.

"You lie! You lie!"

Even in his excitement Euston smiled slightly.

"I don't blame you for thinking so. I'm not a son to be proud of. I've been a pauper all my life—a tramp, a drunkard. I am insurgent now—a leader of riot, men would say—but I doubt if you look upon me, despite this, as I do on you." He leaned forward. "Back of you I see the grief and shame of a beloved woman, the ruin of another woman's life, the breaking of a gentle heart, the oppression of thousands of poor helpless creatures. . . . You are the epitome of greed and self-indulgence, and you have put in my miserable body the seeds of your evils. I despise you, but I am your son."

Grismore gave a short laugh that caught in his throat. The words of the revelation fascinated him. He took a step forward, and seized Euston's shoulder.

"What a liar! What a liar! It's a damned scheme

to come here and claim this relationship. How do I know but the tide has turned, and you're seeking shelter and protection here?"

Over Euston's pale face passed a veil-like pity.

"Hush!" he said. "Protection *here!* A claim on *you!* Your life is not worth a farthing, unless I choose to save it. A claim on *you?* But one torch to Crompton and Janet, and you will be nearly as poor as I."

Grismore, scrutinizing the face before him, for some trait, perhaps, some look to link it with another, said less roughly:

"What evidence have you to bring that what you say is true?"

"None," said the man shortly. "I have come to tell you the truth, not to claim a relationship more loathsome to me than that of illegitimate birth. I can say no more."

He took the crumpled note and cheque from his pocket.

"This cheque, with its pictures, with your handwriting, I have remembered all my life. Slips like this used to come to my home in Western New York, to my mother. With this cursed money she paid for my education, until you stopped your payments and cut off mother and child. . . . I knew I should recognize that signature if I ever saw it again; now it comes to me as a bribe—a low-worded insult from my father."

He could not use his left hand, so with his right hand and his teeth he tore the cheque into bits, the pieces scattered on the floor.

Grismore watched him. This individual, whose sole feeling toward him was hate, who was pitted against him for ruin, was his son, his own flesh and blood.

"I will describe her to you." A spasm of pain crossed his face. "She had blue eyes and soft, pretty hair, the colour of certain grapes, blue-black, with a lustre along it . . ." A faint smile, very tender, came to his face as the image soothed him. Then, "My God!" he cried. "Brute—devil that you are!" he sprang forward. With one gesture he dashed Grismore's pistol from his hand; it fell across the floor, struck in the base-

board, and discharged with a crash. "You killed my mother!" he said; "you let her die, day by day, alone, in poverty, disgraced and dishonoured. Without care for the perverted life you had called into existence, you went on your devilish way. . . ."

What he meant to do as he stood close, his right arm raised, he scarcely knew. What he did was to close his eyes with the arm to hide his emotion. Grismore broke the silence; his voice was utterly changed.

"Come," he said gently—"come." He put his hand again on Euston's shoulder with a different pressure. He had at his command no words suitable for either the moment or his new, singularly human feelings. After a second, with no change of tone, he said: "Well, and you have come out here to fling this in my face before those hell-hounds tear me to pieces or roast me alive." Grismore tapped the second pistol, which he took up. "It will take more than a few hundred dirty cotton-spinners to catch me alive, my. . . ." He stopped at the word; he might have said—*son!*

Euston's control was coming back to him. He said with more composure:

"You will have no need to commit suicide. I have come out here to save your life for my mother's sake. I can control the men, I believe; I shall, at least, try with all my might."

The father's face softened; he paused, listening. The sounds, although still distant, were perceptibly nearer.

"I suppose I owe you something," he said. "I'll pay you up for this right now. Your mother was my lawful wife, and when Mrs. Grismore found out that I had married her, and had at that time a living wife in New York State, she left me." He made a slight gesture, and said: "I suppose it can't interest you to know that I have had some of my hell right here. . . ."

His son, staring at him, made no reply. As the fact that he had a lawful right to existence, that his youth of suffering, his mother's grief, had been in vain, swept over him, his feelings for the man before him were too

bitter to contemplate. If Grismore looked for a word of filial interest, none stirred the whitening lips of the younger man.

At this juncture again the sound as of an advancing sea came pregnantly to them both.

Euston started forward, and Grismore said:

"There! I guess they're coming. . . . If you can do anything for me, *and care to*"—he emphasized with meaning—"you'd better make haste."

He looked out through the shutters. Across the lawns and broad fields all the space in sight was alive with human beings—a living flood advancing steadily. They were still at least a quarter of a mile from the house. Here and there at the outskirts a torch flared up, its red banners streaming over the mass, black in the blackness of the night. It had been their plan to come quietly, and without noise or warning take their oppressor un-awares. He should look out to see himself surrounded by a human wall.

Before the first man had crossed the lawn the shutters were flung open and Euston stepped out on the balcony.

Chapter IV

MR. GRISMORE will hold the scene before his eyes in his remembrance to his dying day.

It could not be said that he was terrified. He was fascinated by the danger, and quite prepared to blow out his brains at the first prospect of attack that should mean death at the mercy of his mill people. He had no intention of being rent asunder or burned at the stake, but close to the window, his eyes fixed on the tremendous sight before him, he determined to wait until the last moment before putting himself out of existence; and to judge by the hullabaloo, the cries and threatenings, to judge by the mass of human creatures who had come so far with such sinister intent, the moment of self-deliverance Grismore believed must come.

From the balcony, as far as eye could reach, spread a sea of upturned faces, lit by the torchlight, reddened until eyes gleamed lurid, and the very hair of their heads seemed to the manufacturer's agitated vision to rise and dance. Under the exaggeration of the light the expressions of the usually gentle visages were ferocious. It seemed to him as though the labouring world had rolled one stormy tide to his shores to engulf him. The menace, the brandishing weapons, and a torch suddenly hurled from over the heads of the throng, striking the railing, and quivering down to the ground, brought the insurgents terribly near to him. He did not see how he could escape. What influence could one man have on that multitude? What single voice could hope to silence, or even be heard, above the cries of a thousand?

Still, the nearest rioters became quiet wonderfully fast, and lifted their eyes to Euston, who, close to the balcony,

addressed, first one—and then another—and another—over the whole swaying tide.

As much as Grismore could see, the faces softened, and the cries grew less appalling. Flickering torchlight and shadow might mislead him in regard to the aspect of the mass, but they were quieting.

The room seemed full of them to Grismore. He could not believe himself alone, straining ears and eyes to see what his chance was for life. Life! It was sweet still! Its desire and pulse proved it to him as his hand clutched the slender pistol quite ready to fire in act of murder or suicide.

"By——!" he muttered; "if he saves me, if he quiets those devils, I will make him the richest man in Lexington!"

Poor Grismore! Gold was all he could give to the son whose life he had branded with disease and shame. Close to the shutters, a little bent over, he watched through the slats the swaying, seething mob.

"Ah," he thought, "they will sweep forward . . . presently . . . and be on us!" ("Us," it was now.) "They will brush him away like a straw—and then come to me."

And, indeed, it seemed as though they would do so. The name of Grismore introduced by Euston into his address stimulated ferocity anew, and it rang in their mouths, coupled with curses, until his flesh grew cold. But above his personal fear, as he watched that one figure against a thousand, there awoke in him a feeling of anxiety for the man valiantly fighting for him, fearlessly bearing the brunt of the danger, offering himself to a thousand blows, pleading, calling in that wonderful ringing tone that overshot the distance like an arrow, and found hearts in the uttermost edge of the crowd.

With the insurgents—Grismore, listening—was carried on the power of that voice.

Magnetic and telling, it rose like a sob and quivered; it rang out like a clarion and commanded. Grismore

was too tense to catch the words, but the people nearest Euston heard, and those a little farther still caught his meaning, and from pushing and jostling and swaying, from cursing riot, the insurgents became attentive. Born inspirer, leader and commander, he was their master. He had been for years, and he claimed his leadership supremely at this crisis. They were under the leash of his words. They were under their spell above all, and they could not choose but obey. One by one his orders, his encouragements, his reproofs, and his promises were passed over the heads from the nearest to the farthest ranks. Whisper, like a rustling forest, filled the air, then fell to silence as his voice took up a new thread.

All this did not consume more than twenty minutes. It was not half an hour since the rioters poured themselves forth, a foam of angry waters, to envelop in a whirlpool everything that bore the name of Grismore. And now the minds of this multitude were falling more nearly into peace than ever they had known hitherto in all their lives. For Euston with authority and conviction promised them—in the name of Grismore, what seemed a millennium!

By the cries that rose Mr. Grismore could mark the progress and the success, and understand what had been Euston's argument.

"Shorter hours!" (Then cheers for Mr. Grismore.)
"Rise in wages!" (Cheers for Mr. Grismore.) "Better times all through!"

And from the place where he stood the manufacturer saw that Euston had won. His eyes left the crowd, and rested on the slender figure of the single man dimly seen in the darkness by the uncertain flare of a few torches as Euston leaned against the balustrade white as death.

Grismore could see him smile and extend his uninjured hand. His gesture complete with brotherhood, instinct with tenderness, seemed to bless the beings whom his father had wrung like rags in his greed. And the victory transfigured Euston in the eyes of the man who gazed at

him. He was proud of him. The sensation running through him was electric; it infused a new life. It was Fatherhood. Its sentiment, coming to him for the first time, made him conscious of a feeling more soft, more melting, than pride—of yearning and tenderness. His eyes pricked . . . *that was his son!*

Here cries of "Grismore! Grismore!" rang out, and they brought him to himself with a start almost unnerving. They wanted him to come out that they might curse him? To tear him asunder? . . . No, *to thank him!* Without hesitation he stepped on to the balcony.

Euston turned, and as he spoke to his father his failing voice showed his emotion and strain.

"Speak to them, please; tell them everything I have promised is true. . . . You must swear it . . . it is your only chance."

His words sounded cold and hard to the man now profoundly touched. Grismore was wounded for the first time in his life.

Leaning with both hands on the balcony, he said as loudly as he could:

"It's all true, my men; I grant your demands! Better times," he called—"better times!"

And it echoed from a thousand throats. He did not know what he had promised; he was elated, intoxicated with the excitement of the hour, and the natural feeling that was revealing him a better man than he had ever dreamed to be.

He turned to Euston to thank him, to say some word that would link him with his son, but the pleasure was denied.

The shouts had turned to Euston's name, and the people claimed him. Four or five men scaled the balcony; he was caught up on the shoulders of the throng, and handed over the crowd. As it moved and swayed and turned away from the Grismore place, the manufacturer watched it—a mass of labourers going to a sure success led by *his son!* He called to Henry Euston, but he could make no impression upon the tumult. They were headed for Rex-

ington; there they would take what food and good cheer the town could give their starving need.

And as Euston had left the Rexington strikers under sworn promise and oath bound to peace, tranquilly disbanding and going to their homes in a conquered city, so he led the Crompton insurgents to triumphantly display their victory to the town.

Chapter V

THE days following her interview with Henry Euston, and the time of Amanda's promised meeting with him, were unlike the usual interval between love and its goal. They did not drag, they were winged. They flew too fast.

If Amanda had loved the man less, or more newly even, the remembrance of his face as she last saw it in the flickering instantaneous light of the match, the sensation of the hands that clung to hers with the force of a perishing man, would have been sufficient to render her unconscious to the splendid gift she was in reality making, to cloud any likeliness of sacrifice. But Amanda required no stimulus, since to love Euston, to be his and for ever near him, was all she cared for in existence. It was the opposite condition she could not contemplate. To lose him, to conceive his desolate ruin, would have wrung for her, the very heart out of life.

The days at Penvallon were relentlessly swift. She realized that she was bidding farewell to a portion of the world, and in a measure to all mankind. She might never visit these poor, degraded people again; she was to be more degraded than they. If they knew of her flight, they would despise her. The individual case of Milly Jones was the hardest to contemplate. With this woman Amanda's influence had been great, and she knew that with the authority of a pure and consistent life she could save Milly. Now she felt that she dragged her along with herself to shame. But since the universe pitted against Euston could not avail to weight the balance, it is not strange that Milly should be lost with the rest of decency and the world. She arranged her parting with the girl with diplomacy, contriving an errand of

importance at Plankville which she confided to her protégée, and in a cart driven by the negro jehu of the town Amanda, with no farewell whatsoever, saw Milly start away, a deserted and unconscious victim of The Great Temptation.

Then she visited all her friends and beneficiaries, and diffused with new lavishness her bounties throughout Penvallon. She successfully avoided Mr. Ware. He recalled to her mind the sage in Lamia—his challenging eyes threatening to reduce her happiness, if such it could be called, to ashes.

She sent her maid and luggage North, telling the woman to await her orders in New York at a given address, that she herself would follow soon. She was going away to rest and to travel. These things accomplished, she felt extremely free, and could not but find it strange that so little inevitable barrier was raised between her desire to adjust her life as she wished and its fulfilment. Unremarked, and with no good-bye to Ware, thankful to have been spared the farce it would have been, she settled herself in the car, and let her beating heart, her agitated, not thoroughly understood emotions, have their sway. Before her eyes through the window the stretch of the little village and the mills slipped from sight, and the train passed directly into the darkness of the forest-covered country between Penvallon and Rexington.

She arrived in Rexington at noon, and was regarded with curiosity by the railroad officials, one of whom came up to her and said:

“Excuse me, m’a’m, but you won’t go up to the town? There’s a riot there, and it wouldn’t be safe, even if the police would let you pass.”

Greatly disturbed, she cast about in her mind what course to take. She could get out to the moors by the lower river road. This was not only a possible, but the most direct course. It would give her, however, twelve long hours between the time when Euston had promised to come. As she started forward, intending to try to

bribe some man to carry her satchel part of the way, she came face to face with Mr. Ware.

With no surprise—almost as if he had expected to meet her, as, indeed, he had, for he had travelled from Pen-vallon in another car—he said:

“How glad I am to see you here! I am starting over to Crompton with a lot of provisions for the poor people. I have learned of a woman there in great need. Indeed if we ”—and he used the pronoun with singular assurance —“do not hurry, we may be too late.”

His presence caused her the liveliest annoyance. She could not say to him, “You must leave me. I am here to meet Henry Euston clandestinely. I am going away with him to-night.” She could only try to disguise the truth as well as she could. Ware was scarcely equal to the duplicity which his course of conduct demanded. His voice trembled slightly as he addressed her.

“You will drive out with me?”—he almost appealed. “The road is quite safe; it is deserted. I need your help.” By his face—and his tone—in a flash—Amanda saw that he knew. She stood quite still, and her expression was that of a dogged, determined child, almost a challenge. After a second she said:

“I must be in Rexington this evening. Until then I will go where you like, if you will promise to bring me back.”

And Ware, over lips as pale as hers, said:

“If you will come with me now to this deed of mercy, I will see you are driven to any destination you may choose to name.”

She believed him, and without replying followed him to the station platform. They were some three-quarters of a mile from Rexington; the depot was guarded by soldiers. The railway traffic hitherto had been undisturbed. One sole vehicle stood as if it waited for them. Ware said:

“I have hired this buggy for all day and all night if need be. Will you get in?”

And Amanda obeyed.

Ware drove directly toward the mills, and the woman by his side never vouchsafed a word during the four miles. There were moments when he imagined she must hear his beating heart; that she must have some consciousness of his trend of thought, of his almighty desire that from what she intended to do she should be restrained.

Chapter VI

THEY stopped before the first house on the line of the deserted Crompton village. Amanda got out of the buggy, and at the foot of the porch steps for the first time since they started from Rextington she met fully his eyes, and her defiant expression was eloquent, and said for her: "Why have you brought me here, Mr. Ware? By what right? Why do I obey you?"

But as she did not speak, and as he evidently did not intend to accompany her, she ascended alone the steps of the little frame house. She found the front-room empty, as was likewise the kitchen, where before her rose the inevitable stairway to the loft above. Something stronger than her inclination impelled her, and she went upstairs. There the garret revealed to her a tumbled bed, and thrown across it a woman. Amanda glanced at the figure with a chill of horror. Had Mr. Ware brought her to the dead? From the creature's ragged skirt protruded a naked leg, the foot encased in a broken shoe. The visitor went across to the bed, and put her hand on the woman's shoulder. It was warm, and the live touch disrobed the situation of mystery; repugnance only remained. Amanda shook the sleeper, slightly turned her over, and saw her face.

"Wake up!"

Her voice was hard. She would give no name, no identity to this individual. The person so coldly summoned opened her eyes, rubbed them, sat up, and stared. "Get up; come downstairs!"

Thus brusquely aroused from her sleep, the woman, who had seated herself on the edge of the bed, yawned aloud, and said drawlingly:

"Well, Ih'm up, ain't Ih? What you-all rousin' 'round hyar fer?"

"Come downstairs if you can. It is too hot here to breathe."

The other squinted suspiciously at the stranger.

"G'wan down yo'self. Nobody ast you-all up. Ih ain't comin'; Ih'm afraid."

"Of what, pray?"

"Ever'thin'." She looked over her shoulder. "The han's is gone crazy."

"You have no need to be afraid. There's no one in the town; it seems deserted."

"So et am—since noon. *Ih* wouldn't go with 'em! No, suh! Ih reckon thar's 'nough tew lynch Grismore 'thaout me. He ain't done me the harm others hev."

The face, overlaid with dirt until the original lines were effaced, was growing distinguishable to the eyes of the visitor, who was forced against her will to read it, to consider it, to find it terribly changed for evil, to see little remnant of decency on it—marks of care, suffering, and sin—no lingering trace of girlhood or of the young, pretty creature of whom she had been girlishly jealous in years before.

"What you-all hyar fer?"

"I came to see if you had everything you want!"

The other laughed aloud. It sounded at once familiar and dreadful to the sister.

"Look raound 'n' see!"

"It seems squalid—dreadful. You are poor . . . ?"

Lily Bud spread out her dirty hands and scrutinized them.

"That's what rich folks allers asts—'Got all you want?' Why, Ih ain't got reg'larly nothin'."

The visitor, still hard and repellent, would ask no further questions. Her head swam with the stunning shock this existence dealt. Her lips were dry, her eyes burned. She took out her purse and a roll of bills, which she gave to the woman, who took the gift indifferently, and did not even look to see its worth. Her curious gaze on the lady, she asked:

"What you-all seeked me aout fer?"

"I heard you had lately come to Crompton from Iretton. . . . You must be sorry to be here—in these terrible times."

The woman replied gloomily:

"Times is alike tew me—all baad. Ih ain't hed no luck sence Ih wuz bo'n. All Ih hope is . . ." Her voice assumed a sudden life; hitherto her attitude had been apathetic. "All Ih hope is, that this yer strike will do *him* up."

Searching the coarse countenance, a mirror reflecting the lowest images, until its very form was distorted, Amanda shuddered to think these eyes had ever seen, these lips ever approached, the man she knew and loved.

"Whom do you mean by 'him'?"

"Ma husban'. Tew look at me, you-all wouldn't reckon Ih had a lawful husban'. This is how he lets me lie!"

"Can he help it?"

"Help et? He's a rich man! He thinks he suttinly am a gen'leman. *He ain't fit tew live.*"

Her disdain had a certain quality of dignity, and she straightened herself as she judged him. The visitor's face was in the shade. The mill woman could not see it.

"I must be going."

It was beyond her endurance to face longer this epitome of need, want, and accusation. But her exit was not so simple.

"No, suh. You-all ain't goin' like that! You shakes me up and gives me a bundle o' dollars and snakes aout, 'thaout telling you're naime? No, suh!" She came over to Amanda and stopped in front of her. "You rich folks make me *sick!*" she blurted out. "Ih know you-all. You're the lady what spen's her money tew Penvallon, Ih hyard, ain't yo'?"

The stranger bent her head, acknowledging the fact.

"Look at me!" cried the woman. "Ih'm a show, ain't Ih? Well, et's all his fault what calls hisself Euston. That's ma naime, tew. Henry Euston what leads this year distric', he's ma husban', ma'am."

The information arousing no comment, she went on:

"Ef Ih'd hed a chanct Ih'd of riz along of him. Ih suttinly would, tew! He's so set on *raising* folks! Ef he had a littl' *pachance* I'd tried hard. Ih uster think ef Ih had a littl' chil'—he's so po'ful fond of children—ef Ih'd of hed a kid, he'd of stuck by me. But, ma'am, what does you-all reckon?" She approached her dirty face near to Amanda's and her voice broke. "*Ma sister—ma own sister*—like tew murder me, 'n' killed th' child Ih'd of hed."

(Here the hearer exclaimed under her breath.)

"Ih wuz terrible ill. Et wasn't never bo'n."

She wiped her face on her dress skirt. Once her guest had put out her hand as though to stop the words, to ward off their effect, for fear her heart prove less adamant.

Again she murmured, "I must go."

The other woman now put her hand on her arm. She said presently:

"You-all go abaout these parts quite some . . . Hev' you ever seen him?"

"Yes; I have seen Mr. Euston."

The hands of the creature were forcing the money back into the giver's.

"What are you doing? . . . Keep the money. What are you doing?"

"You-all ast me ef Ih got all Ih waant. Ih don't reg'larly waant anythin' but *him*. Ast him tew come come back tew me."

"Why do you return the money to me? . . . It is yours."

"Money ain't nothin' tew me," she said, with a choke in her voice. "He-all sends me plenty o' bills. Ih never hev' teched one on 'em. Ih got 'em all. Ih want *him*. 'N' ef he'd give me a chanct Ih'd clean up 'n' try ter rise."

She had risen! As Amanda looked at the heavy face, the sodden eyes seemed illumined.

"Et's years sence Ih seen him," she murmured. "Ih came along over tew Crompton tew be near ez Ih could."

The mill clock of Crompton struck eight. There was no one in the deserted town to summon from labour, or back to toil again, but its summons was direct to Amanda, warning her if she lingered she would be late—late for her meeting with the man she loved, late for her unlawful meeting with the husband of this woman, whose heart was breaking for him! Without speaking, she turned abruptly and went downstairs, the other following. There in the light—for the kitchen was bright with sunset—as she crossed the room, her hair caught the abundant glory, and her face was clearly revealed. The woman, rushing to her, caught her arm, turned her forcibly about, half believing, half doubting, she cried:

“*’Manda—’Manda Henchley!*”

Ah, the old, old name, uttered by a voice full of beseeching, and joy, and tears, as though it would summon for both of them whatever memory of childhood remained!

In Lily Bud the revelation produced but one simple effect. She was glad! She threw her arms about her sister, pressed her to her, repeating between sobs and gasps of joy, “*’Manda! ’Manda!*”

But the utter unresponsiveness of the figure she embraced penetrated even her ecstasy. She let Amanda free, still sighing and sobbing.

“*Ih know’d you-all by your haar, ’n’ you-all didn’t rightly know me, did you?*” she said pathetically. Then her countenance altered in the twinkling of an eye, and she said slowly, with penetration, “*Why, yes, yo’ did tew, ’n’ yo’ come hyar fer tew see me . . . ’n’ yo’ wuz ’shamed o’ me . . . ’n’ yo’ give me money . . . ’n’ yo’ wuz goin’ away ’thaout speakin’ . . .*”

That look of desolation and agony must not settle on the poor face to leave the cruellest scar of all the many! That cry of grief and reproach now at the lips must never come forth!

Amanda’s arms were about her sister; she held her silently, her cheek soft and sweet and delicate as a flower against the beautiless face, against the tear-stained, dirty

cheek. She felt no repugnance, no distaste; a wonderful emotion of tenderness and protection shook her. She was changed. Her heart melted in her breast.

"I wouldn't have gone so, I am sure! To see you so poor, so changed, so needing whilst I have so much—it dazed me—do you see? Can you understand? Lily Bud . . . Lily Bud . . ."

She kissed her, and, drawing back a little, looked at her frankly, lovingly; the gray eyes gave their beauty and their passion sincerely to the other eyes, who read but one thing in their depths—tenderness. This was 'Manda, with the red, red mouth, and the pretty hair!

Amanda made her sister sit down, and Lily Bud clung to her as though, if she let her go, she might vanish out of her sight.

"You must forgive me, Lily Bud, for the past . . . for the wicked blow I never meant to strike. . . You will forgive me?"

The day, so portentous, so historic for the State of South Carolina, was nearly at its close, and the declining sun, flaming in at the shanty window, folded the two women in ineffable glory.

Lily Bud gazed down in rapture at the apparition so familiar, yet so strange. She was unmindful of the posture her sister had assumed, and of its suggestion of confession, its pleading for forgiveness, for pardon. Amanda, on her knees by Lily Bud's side, caressed her sister's hands. Her agitation and her need of all her control was great. As she replied to the torrent of naïve, curious questions, her whole nature was in tempest of revolt and passionate desire to override still, at the eleventh hour, all things for love. Thus she knelt, answering her sister gently, patiently, and the fire and beauty this struggle imparted to her uplifted face might well impress the mill woman.

"You-all suttinly is growde up peart, 'Manda Henchley. 'Pears like yo' wuz made outter gold in this yer pretty evenin'."

Without, in the deserted village, Mr. Ware waited for Amanda to appear. With what success would his mission meet? He believed he knew the woman sufficiently well to predict the desired end. However unbound by convention, however lawless she might be by nature, however willing to sacrifice herself to the man she loved, he believed she would not sacrifice another. Her generous heart, quick to respond to the cry of need and pain, would in this case be equal to the demand upon its grace.

The row of houses along the street suggested shells from which the lepidopteræ had flown, having found their wings. In the distance, over bordering wood beyond the Bye, the sky, yellow as marigold, swept deeply above the pine-trees, whose purple, filmy points penetrated into the effulgence, yet took no tone other than their own. Towards the zenith the translucent heaven melted, pulsed, and to his eyes seemed to vibrate. In the face of the terrors of REXINGTON (and he had but to cast his look in the other direction to see when the wind carried the smoke of the burning mills against the east), in spite of the sedition and evil and strife, his heart was singularly at peace. He felt selfish to be so tranquil, and wondered if he were growing callous to life.

Just here he heard the cry of a young child left in the neighbouring house. Presently a little girl not over nine years of age came running out from another cottage, and went into the house where the cry was, and reappeared, staggering under the weight of a baby. She sat on the steps humming to it in a melancholy voice. She was representative of all her tribe—pinched, haggard, ragged, a travesty on childhood; elf, changeling, left in youth and joy's place. She knew labour, and now she soothed infancy with the patience of age. She was singing in a high, droning key a hymn caught, perhaps, at some service of his own:

“Abide with me, fast falls the eventide. . . .”

She did not know the words. He, listening, supplied them mentally, as she swayed and crooned. He was

startled from his musings by a voice at his side: "Mr. Ware . . ."

He exclaimed, "Miss Morgan!" and hastily descended from the carriage to receive her. The woman's face bore the marks of weeping, but revolt and accusation had vanished, to be replaced by deep composure. Summoned as he thus was from communion with spiritual things, Amanda's face was as the face of an angel.

Without speaking, he helped her into the buggy, and they started away toward the river road to Lexington. Before they left the town, he said:

"I shall drive you to Lexington . . . then return here. There is much I can do to-night for the people left behind, unless you care to stay as well?"

"No, if you will be so kind as to drive on, and as quickly as you can."

Her profile was to Ware; the fall of her lashes against her cheek's fairness, the curve of that cheek, and the droop and deep indenture of the lovely mouth—how well he knew them all!

The cries and noise of Lexington came to them with the smell of smoke and cotton and oil.

"He may be dead by this," the woman was thinking, "as we drive here; he may be hurt or dead. God knows in what state or where he is; but if he is amongst the living he will find means to come to me."

Chapter VII

BACK of Euston were the sensations of a lifetime compressed into a few hours. *And yet he thought of but one sole thing.*

The Supreme Sensation has won its right to its distinction. Skies cannot wall it out—it pierces heaven. Mountains cannot fix its horizon—it has gone beyond . . . melting over their peaks. Seas cannot quench it; it is the vital spark instinct with life. Have you ever observed the mad tearings of a river along its bed, where in the centre abruptly rises an obstructing-stone? It marks the entrance, too, of a new source springing determinedly here in the very heart of the river. Indomitably the waters rush swiftly back over the rock, a second current pushing, forcing, shaking its torrent of crystal drops up the stream. Who shall tell the bubbling waters that the stronger current gathers them scarcely are they born, and this course, inevitable as the river, is toward the sea?

Euston had discovered the man to whom he owed his existence. He had probably saved his father's life. He had seen himself first threatened by hundreds of half-crazed beasts, then the beloved of as many reclaimed people. The fiery enthusiasm to be conceived only by a leader of mankind, the exaltation in the power to sway a multitude, when from heart and brain the current runs until the limbs glow, the hands tingle, and the eyes film with the consciousness of a magnetic personal sympathy that must carry the people to whatever shore the speaker will—all had been his. In his apotheosis he had thought of but one thing. He must get loose of them all, reach his house, "*and if God is good!*"—he put it so—by midnight he would have the one woman of all the world in his arms.

His hand was badly injured, but he was only sensible of a sting that served to accentuate his already keen sensations. What their future would be he had had ample time during this week away from Amanda to consider. They would go to some foreign city—Germany possibly, or Belgium—and there he would write, and by his pen win recognition and perhaps distinction. A man's private life is his own; it need not cripple his career . . . *And for the woman?* As he could only reply to this reiterant question by the frankest, direct facts, he let the issue lie accusing, troubling, unsolved. Unlike Amanda, Euston could not plead primitive ignorance and easy years of freedom from knowledge of public morals and the exigencies of life. He had been well grounded, not in ethics only, but in creed, and he had learned his religion from lips he loved. Nor could he now adduce as excuse his birthright to outlawed things. He had been born in wedlock. He bore no stigma, and if he choose to fling defiance in the face of approved canons, he could claim no especial grace. His reason in arms against his desire, his mind teeming with reproach and warning, he thought of but one thing—*Amanda, Amanda!* Full of her, calling to her with all his nature, he forced his way through crowds, past choked streets, putting aside those who tried to stay him, silencing those who would acclaim. The last person he shook from him was Falloner, who had stuck close to him since his *sortie* from Grismore's. Euston besought him to leave him now and let him go home alone. He was stirred, wanted solitude.

"Come to-morrow the first thing, Dex, and tell me how things are."

He would leave a letter to him—a word of farewell and some explanation.

He then slipped like a thief toward his goal, and succeeded in getting free of the town, and struck out toward the meadows. As he perceived his house in the distance—perceived it dark and unlighted—his heart sank. She was not there! Why should she be? Great God! What reason had he to believe, what right to hope, that

this woman would be so mad as to sacrifice her life to him? He hurried on. If she failed him! In honour and manhood he must rejoice for her—and for himself. . . .

With gloomy brow and beating heart, he put his hand to the latch of the door. . . . On the instant a step fell within—and someone asked, "Who is there?" A match scraped—spluttered, the door opened.

With his uninjured arm he caught her strongly to him; he fairly lifted her across the room. She was close against the bandaged hand, but he was unconscious of it. They stood thus a few moments immovable as one figure in the meagre light from the candle; it flared sickly, quaveringly, and then burned straight and clear. Amanda, as she made herself free, perceived that he was wounded.

"You are hurt! What have they done to you? How cruel—cruel! On this of all nights!"

In answer to her solicitude he said:

"Because it is this night, I do not know that I am hurt. . . . I don't feel the least scratch. I only know life is worth living. . . . I am glad for the first time to have been born!"

He sank down on a chair. Dust stained, dishevelled as he was, he was on fire—eager, successful; the single fact that he had a legitimate right to a name and existence lifted a burden from him. He looked young to her and beautiful, and as he devoured her with his ardent eyes her own fell. She was shaken beyond control, and carried whither she must not go.

"Tell me, how were you hurt, Henry?"

Euston stghed as though he were unwilling to contemplate any fact but one.

"All day I have been trying to quiet Rexington. This excess, you may be sure, was in no way due to my orders. A mill hand struck at me with his knife as I was trying to turn the tide. Falloner flung up his arm just as he struck, otherwise he would have killed me.

We had all we could do to keep them from lynching him."

He gave her a brief account of the day—all save the fact that he was Grismore's son; this long story he reserved for some quieter time.

She listened. Her pride in him, her admiration for his courage and success, combined with her love to make him seem heroic. If she had appreciated how potent for his victories the passion that illuminated him had been; how she infused and inspired him, she would have trembled to contemplate for him an existence with this flame struck out.

He murmured:

"Amanda, with you near me always I am sure to win. Temptation is quite incompatible with my present state. I am filled with you—Amanda!"

But she stood silent, her hands clasped.

His ecstasy at finding her here, the fact that she had kept her promise and come to him—the surrender of herself her presence declared blinded him to her appearance. He failed to see her pallor and the tears—not yet dried on her lashes—but when she did not answer him, averted her head and repulsed his embrace of her—he bent forward, searching her expression for explanation, and cried in a voice of tenderness and reproach:

"Come nearer to me! Why do you draw away? Look at me!"

Dismayed at her unresponsiveness, he let fall the hands he was holding, and said abruptly:

" . . . You repent, already, perhaps?"

To this she indeed murmured some reply, but it was inaudible. She leaned against the table for support whilst he waited with contracting heart for her to deny his words.

Then she turned and burst forth, almost with violence: "Yes, I do regret! Oh, you don't know what I have been through waiting all these hours in this gloomy house. No one to speak to—no one to tell me where to turn or what to do. But I don't say that," she interrupted herself.

"I *know* what to do—every woman knows. Oh, I have seen ghosts here!"

She shuddered, looking over her shoulder as if she expected an apparition to lurk behind Euston.

"Please stand where you are, Henry, don't come to me. We are wrong—terribly wrong—we will bring a curse upon ourselves!"

With her words, solemn and forboding, she pushed him from her, her hands against his breast.

Euston, before whom on this day of his apotheosis every barrier had fallen, listened as well as his excited senses would permit, but he scarcely heard her. The meaningless words meeting the flame of his passion were whirled out of existence. But as he was about to forcefully claim her, to silence her in his embrace, he was withheld by the cold defiance on her face—the dread of him, so he read it—in her eyes. She had ceased to care.

She went on. "Listen to me! Something very strange has happened since I saw you, and for the first I realize what madness we have planned. It is useless to argue—useless to plead——"

"Useless to plead?" he exclaimed, drawing nearer to her. "Why I love you—do you hear? . . . don't you know it?—and you love me—you have said it many times."

She had not sufficiently counted on his ardent nature. To-night he was victor, his birthright had been restored, and, transported to the highest pinnacles of excitement, he had been carried on the very wings and breath of success to her. His compelling eyes drew hers to his as tides to suns, she seemed to melt—to transfuse into him. She tried in vain to evade him; with a gesture as if brushing aside invisible foes between the woman and himself, he swept her into his embrace.

There were to him no codes, no laws but one; the mightiest of all pleaded in his pulse. They were alone in the world together, himself and the woman in his arms.

"Ah, let me go!" she cried, breathless. "Let me go, Henry."

She kept her face from him obstinately, and her lips, and cried over his words which assailed her ears and stormed her heart:

"I have seen my sister."

Here his arms dropped from her. She at length claimed his attention, but her words brought with them great relief. *This* then was the secret of her altered attitude! Putting both slender hands either side her face, framing its agitation, her loosened hair falling over her fingers, she whispered brokenly—

"I shall never forget that dreadful sight as long as I live. Oh, that wretched, miserable creature!—deserted—abandoned—and she loves you still. I am *not* yours! You belong to another woman—I can't rob her of you."

He still did not realize the significance of her words. The sense of her was yet in his embrace—his heart had beat for ever so short a time on hers—it stung him to ecstasy still.

He put out his hand and said simply:

"Come—dearest."

Euston, who for others' causes had many powerful pleas, had no words for the crisis of his life. He only repeated with tender obstinacy:

"Come—Amanda."

With a fainting courage and a great joy as she saw her power over him she saw too the fruitlessness of her mission. She had failed, and her strength was leaving her fast; she retreated back a few steps as if she were afraid he would take her by force and carry her away, as if she were afraid she would go!

"Where are your things, Amanda? it is late."

Her hands were at her breast to quiet its uncontrolled beating—all the natural forces, blind and purely human, clamoured for the man she loved. She had but one desire—she was utterly his. But she courageously rallied her forces toward one more effort for the woman at Crompton Mill.

"Go?" she said sharply. "Why, you can't leave Rex-

ington—the people and you. You can't leave *that* wretched woman——”

But he broke in passionately:

“What are you saying? No woman under God's heaven has a right to me but you—we belong to each other. . . . How can you speak or think of anything but ourselves, Amanda! Your sentiment is false—you don't mean what you say—you don't *know* what you say. Hush—I will not listen! You are mine—mine—mine. . . .”

He had again drawn her to him.

“ . . . Hush,” he commanded again, “I refuse to hear! Let us go, now—we are nearly too late. Dearest, do you dream I am going to give you up?”

She yielded—wax to his fire, so it seemed to him, and his heart leaped as she let him lead her gently across the room, close to her—his cheek on hers. But suddenly she came to her reason and almost brutally pushed him from her; the colour rushing into her face as if her blood proclaimed the loyalty she was about to deny.

“Don't—don't—let me free, Henry!—don't touch me again!”

And her voice was so strange that he stood away from her, smitten at length through his passion.

“What do you mean?”

Amanda realized that appeal to him was useless. So long as he believed she loved him, they were lost, all three.

“You have carried me away,” she said slowly, “by your magnetism and your power, as you have carried away the cotton-spinners. When I am with you—see you—I forget the right. When I am away from you—it is different.”

As she said these words in a voice from which all tenderness for him had gone, everything in Amanda renounced for him in this sacrifice rose to his vision as never in the time when his love, warmly returned, clouded everything else in the world.

“I don't understand. . . . I don't follow you, Amanda. My own feelings have made me stupid.”

It seemed already to him that he was speaking to another woman.

"If we went away together to-night," she said, "it would mean that we put our love supreme——"

He interrupted hotly, catching her words:

"So it is—so I do put it——"

"But I do not."

Euston quivered as though she dealt him a blow—he was white as his bandaged arm.

"Amanda——"

She made no reply.

He repeated across the dim space of the candle-lit room, "Amanda!" summoning her to him.

She knew she could not look at him again and keep her control, so she fixed her gaze on the space of the open window before her where without hung a curtain of blue darkness, the soft humid atmosphere of the midsummer night. Her hair, dishevelled, fell about her face, stern and unyielding as though cut from some substance more beautiful than ice, and more cold. Back of her the candle-light shone through the loosened ends of her hair till they glowed like threads of fire.

She heard Euston ask:

"You mean then to tell me—to let me see—that you don't care——?" He stopped.

She could not make her voice obey her. It shook her—calling him—it was met and stifled by her will.

"Answer me——!"

She bowed her head.

He felt a convulsion in his throat. Lest he should be unmanned he hurried:

"I don't believe it—I don't believe it!"

He came nearer to her.

" . . . A false sense of duty is driving you to this, and I tell you it is useless—useless. You are overstrained, nervous, watching in this gloomy place. Tell me—I am right——!"

But she was silent—and as she forced him to believe her, fury sprang into his eyes. When he spoke again

his voice was strained with pride, its scorn hurt like a lash.

"And you came here to send me to that creature?—to put me in my rightful place?—*that* is what you think of me?" he laughed aloud, "the companion of a drink-sodden——"

He stopped, choked back the words.

"*Why* did you come?" he repeated; and she answered, dully:

"I promised to come."

He turned abruptly—went over to the window and leaned against it. He did not dare to speak again, his anger would have scorched her. Betrayed, balked, he felt himself the plaything of caprice. Amanda stood behind him like an inanimate, bloodless woman, and so tense that a motion on her part would have broken her like a reed.

Well—she had saved them, then, from whatever disaster her imagination had foreseen during the long hours of watching for Euston. Body and soul they were rescued. To atone for the past to Lily Bud, she had given up her life and soul.

It was long after eleven—an engine's whistle screamed out shrilly again and again, a signal of distress. It was the train they should have taken! The impersonal call reached Euston through his anguish and he turned about, revealing his face with its set, rigid lines, the lips hard and accusing. He spoke with difficulty:

"One of us must go at once. I can of course do so, but it will be hard for you to leave in daylight. Had you any plans?"

He waited.

She murmured:

"Mr. Ware, I think, will be waiting for me at the Carson City mill with a carriage."

Her gloves and hat lay by the candlestick; she gathered them up and put on her hat with trembling fingers. She was very beautiful, her eyes dilating through the tears that rushing from her heart would not be denied.

. . . And could a woman look like that upon any but the man she loved? Could eyes weep tears like these for any reason but love? Lips quiver so, and plead, for any but one cause in the world——?

She flew across the half-lit darkness, tore open the door, and fled into the night; but Euston had followed her, and with a cry he caught her to his breast. It was densely dark—the glimmer of the candle-light following them scarcely revealed Amanda's face as she raised it to the man who bent over it reading, searching it with imploring eyes.

"Tell me—tell me the truth—speak to me again."

Through her tears she said:

"Oh, Henry—Henry—beloved—God forgive me—I love you so—I love you so—there is nothing else in the world." She hid her face against his breast.

As they stood together—the woman trembling, vanquished—the man shaken with joy and triumph and the revolution from despair to the highest heaven—a thunder of sound rang out on the atmosphere; struck it and left it palpitating. The ground vibrated under their feet. Amanda and Euston started apart, smitten by a sense of horror and disaster. Again followed an abrupt undertone like a groan from the bowels of the earth.

"What is it, Henry——?"

Was it the river rising—was it the day of doom—or had they gone mad?

They stared at each other, their features dimly seen in the thick darkness. In a flash of time they read the hour's terrible portent, and felt themselves in the shadow of death. Behind them lay their insignificant past, however puny—irrevocable, changeless now, for men and their children's children to read. How futile was their struggle!—how useless their torturing desire, their selfish gratification, their great and absorbing passion in the face of the universal destiny!

The candle was blown out by the wind. Clinging together in the pitch darkness they groped their way blindly towards the house. A roar, a rush, a hurricane

of sound came from the direction of the mills as if all the mountains of the universe were at war.

“Oh, Henry—listen—— What is it? What can it be?”

They were at the threshold—back of them the rushing as of the wind through fields of harvest wheat, a whispering, seething, surging of many seas; and around their feet cruelly, swiftly, came the circling waters of the rising Bye.

Chapter VIII

WARE tied his horse near the mill building, made his way on foot from house to house—from light to light. rather—and each firefly proved to be a signal from those who were in want or despair. The old, the timid, the very young, the crippled, and the bed-ridden, had been left behind. To them he could minister. He began duties at the house most distant from Lily Bud Euston's shanty, and when, late on into the night, his tired feet ascended her steps, he was white to the lips with the exhausting strain.

She had not gone to bed. The day's excitement was still upon her. Moreover, she had seen Ware pass, and felt sure he would come to see her. He had been so good to her, seeking her from mill to mill until he had found her here, so patient with her outbursts and curses, so untiring in his encouragement, and, best of all, he had brought her Amanda! He would scarcely have known her as she stood waiting for him at the door. He looked in surprise at the figure she presented.

"Howdy, Mister Ware. Ih suttinly *am* glayde . . ."

She nodded to her bed in the room's corner, and put her finger to her lips.

"Et's Conrad's little fellar, Pauley. He's asleep, 'n' when he wakes he do cough so po'ful bayde."

Without speaking, they seated themselves beside the bare table, on which was a teapot with cold sassafras-tea. She offered it as all the barren house could afford. He drank it gratefully, flat and nasty as it was.

Mrs. Euston had spent the interval in trying to introduce some semblance of decency in her appearance. Soap and water used unsparingly had worked wonders. A poignant, though now adoring vision of Amanda's per-

fect loveliness, her glorious hair, her clothes, awoke in the poor creature the envy which becomes emulation. The old coquetry of her nature returned. Even her hair had been soaked in soapy water. It clung damply to her forehead, and from the depths of her possessions she had unearthed a clean wrapper, which she wore with an air of pride and self-respect. Life had revealed itself anew to her. Anew? For the first indeed! So late—*ah*, Heaven, so late! Her sister was restored to her; she believed her husband would return. He might even come this night! At all events, from this hour she would always tidy up against his coming. For Lily Bud—"that which was dead had come alive again, and that which was lost had been found."

Whilst Mr. Ware drank his tea, resting and composing his mind, she talked in a soft undertone, volubly, pathetically dwelling on Amanda's beauty, her fortune, etc.

"'N' she's *good*," she emphasized. "She suttinly ain't gone fer tew let me rot hyar, n'r want fer a thing." Her face was radiant. "She's a goin' tew share with me."

"To the half of her kingdom," Ware thought, "to the whole of her treasure."

He smiled at her sympathetically.

"I am rejoiced for you, and so grateful to see you like this."

"Yessir, Ih suttinly prob'ly am peart t'night."

After a little he said, wondering how to break it to her:

"I have good news for you, Mrs. Euston. I have reason to confidently hope your husband will return."

And Lily Bud gave no start at this miraculous news. She only nodded, and said simply:

"Ih reckon so tew. Ih always reckoned it."

Thus the gigantic sacrifice of two lives was serenely accepted by the unconscious wife with whom were all the points of the law.

"Pore little Pauley Conrad's bad with consumption," she whispered. "Ih done fetched him in off'n the stoop a hour ago."

At this moment a sudden gust of wind blew the front-door of the shanty violently to with force that shook the building. Ware and Lily Bud started. The shock coming thus on a windless night was terrifying. As Ware went to the window and looked out he became conscious that the dense atmosphere was unnatural, and that the sound of the Bye was sinister and tremendous. The air, too, was burdened with the smell of water, not the odour of gentle rain from moist earth, but a concentrated breath as of a thousand torrents.

Lily Bud had risen, pale. The boy in the bed lifted his wasted form, and called to her. Then another gust of wind blew over the lamp on the table, and extinguished it. Ware ran to the bed, and gathered the boy in his arms. He was a skeleton, no more, and light even for Ware.

"Come as fast as you can," he cried. "We must get to the roof."

"*The roof!*" The woman followed him. "*In a storm!*"

But Ware had gone to the staircase by this, and was ascending it.

"Hurry—hurry for our lives. It's the flood!"

They made their way in pitch-dark through the garret, where a ladder reached up to the sloping roof. With great effort they carried the invalid out through the skylight and the eaves, and they clung to the chimney and the opening. They had taken but a fragment of time—it was none too swift. A muffled cannonade reverberated through the night, and Lily Bud cried in Mr. Ware's ear:

"Et's the dams tew th' Forks! They've broke! My God! my God!"

It was still far away—far away, because now remained for them but the mortal span between their living breath and eternity.

Pauley, half in Ware's arms, in his hoarse voice eaten away by disease, said:

"Et cayn't tech mother. Ih'm right glayde!"

Then he burst into violent weeping.

They were at the town's end. The water, already many feet deep in the streets, now came with force sufficient to dislodge the house from its stilts. It was lifted like a ship on the tide, swaying and rocking.

The terror must have Janet for its morsel first, then—Crompton!

Ware heard the woman shriek in his ears above the tumult, "*Pray!*"

He wore a little cross in his vesture. He managed to raise it to her lips. He could think of no words. None came to his mind, filled with deafening, horrible sound. The first great crash, with Pauley's piercing cry, was lost in the thunder with the cries of others. Ware could hear their heart-rending echoes as the wall of water pouring from the Forks rolled its pitiless volume down the Bye. It was advancing with the swiftness of doom.

Janet and its village are swept like leaves on one wave and one torrent. Crompton! The great mill falls together with a crackling, crashing noise, lost, indistinct, drowned in the roar.

"Pray . . . !"

"Hush!"

He held the boy close to him.

"Now . . . Lord Christ!"

The flood had come.

On the roof of the Barracks as it stood unsubmerged above the inundated country a man and a woman saw the morning steal in gray loveliness over a desolated land.

Around them the river, swollen, crowded out of its natural bed and course by the liberated torrents from Forks Dam, had risen until the rooms below were filled with water. There, in obedience to law, they had stopped to come no farther. On the left—Rexington—city bereft in one short day and night of noble industries, scourged by fire and water, scarred by riot—lifted its

steeple and roofs calmly in the pellucid atmosphere before the dawn.

Early as it was, the town was astir. Voices and shouting could be heard at this distance. Boats were already abroad, sent forth to rescue what life might have been spared, and the first boat to leave the town was Dex Falloner's, who, with anxious heart, started toward the Barracks to find his master and his friend.

Ominous débris, black pieces of wreckage, masses dark and appalling, floated away in the distance along the still raging current of the river, or slowly drifted inland.

Clear and bright the pillared front of Mr. Grismore's house rose on its safe eminence.

But the faces of the man and woman were towards the mills.

The mills!

A waste of steel gray water stretched its sheet, its shroud, level over the place where the looms of Janet and Crompton had whirred and sung. Tragedies lay mercifully hidden beneath the concealing tide. All that had been left by the forth-going strikers of living ones and miserable hearths and household goods, here was swept with spindle and shuttle for ever away.

That by the path of flood and death Fate had seen fit to unite the two who sat silent side by side they could not know. That their linked lives—welded, blent through their great love for each other, and their human charity—should in years to come make this watery desert a land of good things, they could not know. That Euston, master of mighty mills, the head of new industries operating for the mutual benefit of employer and employed till to a happy, industrious people his name became a blessed thing, they could not foresee.

Still marvelling that life, and not death, was theirs, they sat, the woman's hands fast in the man's, their awe-stricken eyes upon the flood. And as they looked, the mills, mirage-like, seemed to rise to their sight, filmy, ghostly things out of the deeps.

Slowly, warmly, the gathering beauty of sunrise enveloped and possessed the sky. In disregard of fire, sedition, and disaster, the new day came over the old scenes and the strange new sea. Warmly it touched the windows of the houses of Rexington till they gleamed like stars. Warmly it flushed the surface of the cruel waters till the turbulent miles gave the colour back again, and in the brilliance of the sunrise the little boat crossing the flood toward Euston and Amanda was red as a rose.

THE END

Press Comments

Marie Van Vorst is the first of American women novelists. Her style is nervous. . . . she drives her team in splendid style. Her women are delightful, etched with manifold feminine malice and minute observation. Her pictures of life are brilliantly alive.—*Bookman* (England).

Miss Van Vorst has regarded literature not commerce, and has polished each of her productions to the fineness of a gem.—*Brooklyn Eagle*.

It is hardly possible to write of Marie Van Vorst's work except in praise. Her situations unforced—yet forceful, her characters natural, pathos deep and tender, action living and vigorous, characterize her work. Her ability is far above the common.—*Boston Transcript*.

Alike in her delineation of character, in her creation of situations and in dialogue, Marie Van Vorst displays a powerful art.—*Scotsman* (England).

Marie Van Vorst presents her pictures of the Sterile South without sentimental elaboration, displaying facts raw and bleeding with Tolstoian effect.—*The Reader* (New York).

